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THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

MARIE ANTOINETTE ABOUT 1785

(This portrait by Mme. Lebrun makes a dramatic contrast with that by Prieur painted in the Conciergerie. See plate facing page 428)

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

FROM THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV TO THE COMING OF NAPOLEON

BY

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"THE WAR IN WEXFORD, 1798," ETC.

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INTRODUCTION

WHEN Dickens, in the winter of 1859, essayed "the little task of making a picturesque story," he requested Carlyle to lend him some books which the Sage of Chelsea had used in the production of his *French Revolution*. Carlyle, making more noise in his silence-room than the rest of the world put together, replied with grim humour by despatching to Gad's Hill two cart-loads of "authorities." These supplied the novelist with sufficient facts and local colour to enable him to write *A Tale of Two Cities*.

Since the time of these famous Victorians the literature of the greatest event in history after the Reformation has been increased by a multitude of volumes. There is now a Société de l'Histoire de la Révolution and a monthly magazine devoted to the elucidation of the many phases of the epoch. The memoirs of those who played a part, however insignificant, in the maze of happenings which led to the breaking-up of the *ancien régime* are gradually being given to an interested public, and the French magazines frequently publish valuable sidelights on the personalities of dead and gone monarchists, republicans, and firebrands. This vast accumulation of material is in itself a difficulty to those who would arrive at a reasonable understanding of the

long series of events—military, political, and social—definitely focussed in the eyes of France by the meeting of the States-General in 1789.

In the following pages I have attempted to tell the story of the French Revolution in a simple and straightforward way for those readers who do not profess an intimate knowledge of the great upheaval. They will find how the day of reckoning began to get gradually and sometimes almost imperceptibly nearer from the days when Louis the Great ruled with despotic sway, how the literary work of Voltaire, Rousseau, and other advanced writers and thinkers assisted in the movement towards reform, aided by the cultured chit-chat of the *salons* and the spreading of democratic ideas by those who had taken part in the War of American Independence. They will see how the question of national finance and the quarrels between Louis XVI and the *Parlements* led to the calling of the three Orders to Versailles and to the momentous step taken by the Commons when they attempted to solve their own particular problems by means of the National Assembly. Local government, mob rule, and civil war followed, and parties having widely diverging ideals came into being, each with Constitutional cure-alls which failed to make a lasting improvement in the feverish condition of the body-politic. The outbreak of war, the King's complicity in it, the formation of all-powerful Committees which brought victory to the French beyond the frontier and tragedy to many at home, to give place in turn to reaction, the miserable uncertainties of the Directory and the beginning of the iron rule of "the little Corsican" are detailed.

There the narrative ends. It was the task of the Conqueror to reconstruct the machinery of the State. Some of his measures withstood the shocks of Leipzig and Waterloo and are part of France to-day. Perhaps it is well to remember that it was largely a question of finance and commerce that led to the fall of the man who watched the storming of the Tuileries and marvelled at the King's lack of energy. Napoleon's Continental Decrees marked the beginning of the end of the First Empire.

I do not think that any historian has more ably summed up the reason of the failure of the Revolution to establish a democratic republic than the late Dr. G. K. Fortescue in the Introduction to his translation of Thibaudeau's *Mémoires sur le Consulat*, 1801-1804.[1] "The method of the Revolutionists, from first to last," he says, "was to fix upon one class after another; to deprive each in turn of its privileges, rights, and property; to revile and degrade it until it necessarily represented a foe to the Revolution itself, and then, whether the persecuted class rose against its persecutors or not, declare it to be a public enemy and proceed to exterminate it."

Between 1789 and the *coup d'état* of Brumaire 1799, not a little was accomplished in the direction of the elimination of very just grievances regarding taxation and the social regeneration of France, but taking the shibboleth "Liberty, equality, fraternity" in its widest meaning, the advantages gained were little enough. The Committee of Public Safety knew no such word as "liberty." To deprive a man of a title and estates is not to place him on

[1] *Bonaparte and the Consulate* (London, 1908), p. xii.

an equality with the peasant, even if the vote of the humble and necessary son of the soil has the same power. Balzac summed up the situation in miniature when he wrote, "Of all things in France the most thoroughly French is vanity. It is disappointed vanity that raises the cry for equality." It is bluntly put, but probably correct. The saddest comment on fraternity, which seemed to presage so much in the Champ de Mars on the occasion of the first anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, is the monotonous sound of the guillotine carrying out the dread work of the Revolutionary Tribunal. Yet I doubt not that all concerned, from Robespierre to Sanson and his assistant executioners, considered themselves patriots. The one thing we seldom reconcile in this world is the other person's point of view. This being so I shall not attempt to draw lessons.

Those who wish to go further into the fascinating subject of the French Revolution will find a comprehensive bibliography in Volume VIII of the *Cambridge Modern History*, to which book as well as to Professor H. Morse Stephens's *History*, Miss Sophia H. MacLehose's *From the Monarchy to the Republic in France*, 1788–1792, and *The Last Days of the French Monarchy*, Professor A. J. Grant's *French Monarchy*, 1483–1789, and Dr. J. Holland Rose's *Revolutionary and Napoleonic Era*, 1789–1815, I am particularly indebted as my English authorities. I have also made considerable use of *Mémoires* detailed in the British Museum Catalogue, preferring to quote the actual words of eye-witnesses to paraphrasing them.

The preparation and carrying out of the scheme of the illustration of this book has been the entire responsibility

of Mr. S. G. Stubbs. He wishes to express on behalf of the publishers and himself his deep appreciation of the courtesy of the staff of the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris, and particularly of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, through the kindly interest of whom it has been possible, as an exceptional favour, to secure the reproduction of twenty-two subjects from the wonderful collection of historical prints and drawings made by the late Michel Hennin and bequeathed to the French Nation. In these thanks I also join. I am much indebted to my father for his valuable assistance in many ways.

HAROLD F. B. WHEELER.

NORTHWOOD, MIDDLESEX.

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THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

CHAPTER I

A CENTURY OF CONFLICTS

"One must work hard to reign, and it is ingratitude and presumption towards God, injustice and tyranny towards man to wish to reign without hard work."
LOUIS XIV.

ONE of the impossibilities of life is to state definitely the origin of an event. The past dominates the present to so great an extent as to preclude anything approaching mathematical exactness in this particular. Thus the French Revolution is the sum total of a number of widely differing causes, some comparatively easy to explain, others extremely difficult, if not altogether inexplicable. Dates are utilitarian devices—I had almost written evils—for the purpose of lucidity, an end not always fulfilled. For instance, some authorities begin the chronology of the Revolution with the opening of the States-General in May 1789, others with the fall of the Bastille in the following July. A few fix on 1791, an important year beyond question, because it witnessed the death of the chivalrous demagogue Mirabeau and the ill-considered flight of the royal family from Paris to Varennes. A fourth group prefers 1793, during which Louis XVI paid the price of his dilettantism with his head, the French Convention declared war against England and Holland, the Queen was executed, and the work of drawing up a new constitution for the

Republic was completed. A fifth traces the final decline, if not the actual fall, of the monarchy to the first public appearance of Madame du Barry at the marriage festivities of the Dauphin and Marie Antoinette. Chronology has its limitations, and must never be confused with History proper. It is one of the branches of the parent-stem, and not the trunk; or to use a mathematical simile, a number of units making no definite amount.

Liberty was the leading party-cry of the Revolution. Why? What was the cause of which this was the effect? A nation does not readily adopt a mere shibboleth, however abstract its meaning, without some provocation, some sense of a quality, state, or thing missing from its political make-up. For answer I believe it is necessary for us to go back to the reign of Louis XIV (1643-1715), when the chains of despotism were definitely forged. Here it must be noted, quite apart from the fact that it substantiates what has been said in the previous paragraph, that the smelting process had been commenced by Louis XI, was passed on to Charles VIII, and received great augmentation at the hands of Henry IV, grandfather of *Le Grand Monarque*. By using strong measures against the Huguenots and certain sections of the nobility the work was carried on by Richelieu and Mazarin during the reign of Louis XIII and the minority of his successor. It was the task of Louis XIV to turn out the finished article, and it remained complete until it was shattered by the Revolution. If he was not actually the author of the words attributed to him, "The State, it is I!" he most certainly based his policy on such terms. When Mazarin breathed his last in 1661, the King of twenty-three years bluntly declared that "he intended to be his own first minister," a policy he never forsook. So far as foreign affairs are concerned he was energetic enough, but in

matters nearer home Louis did not always remember the old adage that charity should begin there.

Untrammelled by a Legislature such as existed in England, virtually answerable to none, Louis soon made rapid progress in despotism. The Secretaries of State for War, the Navy, Foreign Affairs, and the King's Household, the Chancellor, and the Controller-General of Finances were the chief servants of the Crown, the term "servants" being used advisedly, for Louis saw to it that there should be no more Richelieus or Mazarins. "It was not to my interest," he says in his *Mémoires*, written for the instruction of the Dauphin,[1] "to take men of eminence for my ministers. I wanted before all things to let the people know, by the rank from which I chose them, that I had no intention of sharing power with them." The Ministers, Councillors, and *Maîtres des requêtes* (lawyers) of the four chief Councils were merely the King's tools. The *Parlement* of Paris, the supreme judicial court, the members of which held office by purchase or heredity, was soon subservient to his will. This is important, because the *Parlement* registered the King's edicts, which alone made them legal. If there was hesitancy in the matter peremptory orders were issued by the monarch for immediate registration, followed, if necessary, by a "bed of justice" presided over by the King, who usually enforced his will without further trouble. For instance, youthful Louis, at the behest of Anne of Austria, who was acting as regent, and Mazarin who dominated her, had recourse to the latter expedient in 1648, the point at issue being a tax levied during the exhausting Thirty Years' War on articles of merchandise brought to Paris for sale. The *Parlement* absolutely refused to do his

[1] They were prepared from his notes by Pellisson in 1670, and handed in 1786 to the Comte de Grimoard. They were first published in 1806.

bidding. Its antagonism to the Crown was shown by the setting-up of a self-appointed legislature known as the Chamber of St. Louis.

Paris resounded with the cry of "Liberty" and openly revolted, Mazarin was banished, and the Royal Family retired to St. Germain. This resistance to the monarchy was followed by the opposition of the aristocracy, known as the Second Fronde, in which the Bastille and the Hôtel de Ville, landmarks in the Revolution of 1789, played their parts. Both attempts to defy the royal authority failed, Mazarin returned in triumph, and Louis ever afterwards remained vindictive towards the nobility and the judicial and municipal bodies. As a consequence the *Parlement* of Paris assumed a political character, and was almost invariably antagonistic to the Crown. Not that this disconcerted Louis XIV, who eventually issued an *ordonnance* requiring royal edicts to be registered within eight days without remonstrance or discussion. That he cared little or nothing for the *Parlement* is proved by the fact that in 1685 he carried out the Act of Revocation of the Edict of Nantes before it had received assent. Had the *Parlements* represented the nation there might have been no Revolution. The magistrates, however, were usually of the privileged classes, consequently when financial reforms viâ a more just distribution of the taxes were mooted they invariably thought of themselves only, and not of the burdened proletariat. Public opinion was nothing to them.

It is true there were the States-General, consisting of representatives of the nobility, the clergy, and the commons—the last mentioned the famous Third Estate—but their assembling rested on the King's good pleasure. This is tantamount to saying that the gatherings were not frequent. Such bodies have a nasty knack of criticising both men and measures, with or without due respect. Former

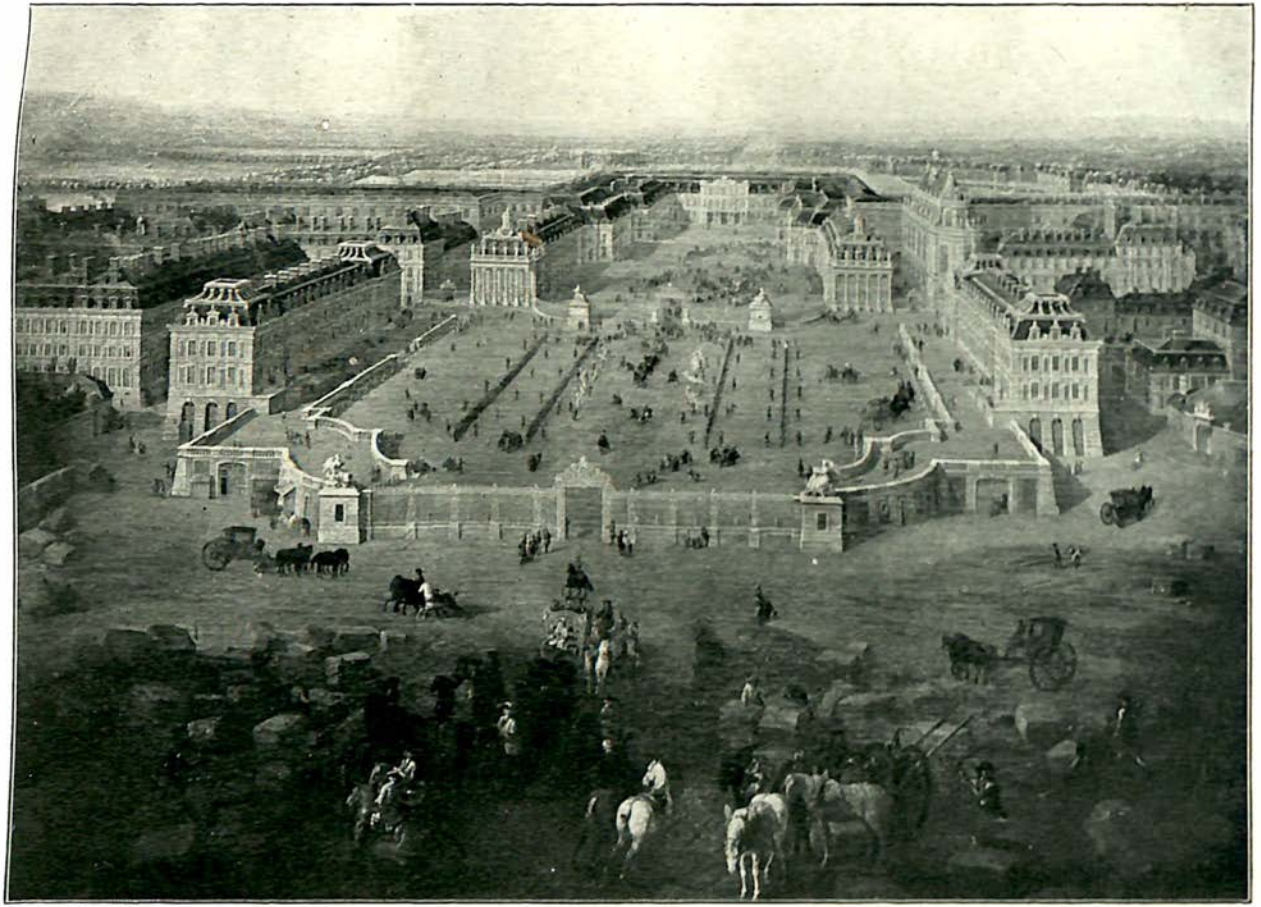
Estates had shown a disposition to dispute the royal prerogative, had gone so far as to entertain ambitions of controlling finance, the appointment of ministers, and of declaring war. Many causes had contributed to their failure to establish anything approaching our own representative chambers, but it is not difficult to discern that the privileged orders of the nation, who were exempt from the more important taxes, were in the majority. The *États-Généraux*, which were instituted in their modern form in 1302 by Philip IV, had last met in 1614; its successor assembled in 1789.

Although the provincial *Parlements*—smaller replicas of that of Paris which administered justice and registered edicts relating to their own provinces only—continued to sit, power was really in the hands of the Royal *Intendants*. These officials, scattered about the country, represented the interests of the throne rather than of the people, and they could do nothing without the consent of Versailles. What *États* continued to exist did so by reason of the fact that they had ruled the provinces before annexation, but much of their original authority had entirely disappeared.

Louis raised what taxes he liked, and spent the money how he pleased. With the recklessness of a fairy-tale monarch, he built sumptuous houses for himself and his court, showered gold on questionable favourites, and was ruthlessly prodigal with his exacted wealth. By erecting a palace at Versailles, where the head of each department of the State was housed and their subordinates found office room in the Rue de la Surintendance, he attracted the nobility from their country seats, the real centre of their interests. The aristocracy flocked to the vicinity as moths to a strong light. Those who were habitually absent were noted, and should such a one request a favour

the King's reply was invariably couched in the same formula, "I do not know him!" No fewer than 36,000 workmen, hundreds of whom died, toiled at the vast structure on the deadly marshland. Estates both vast and small were neglected, and continued to be so, with the sequel that Versailles and the Gay City eventually became the maelstrom of the passions of an outraged country. There was no discount when the bill was rendered on another day and in another century; it was settled in full.

"Louis XIV was made for a brilliant Court," says Saint-Simon, writing with the authority of an observant contemporary. "In the midst of other men, his figure, his courage, his grace, his beauty, his grand mien, even the tone of his voice and the magnetic and natural charm of all his person, distinguished him till his death as the King Bee, and showed that if he had only been born a simple private gentleman, he would equally have excelled in fêtes, pleasures, and gallantry, and would have had the greatest success in love. . . . Never did man give with better grace than Louis XIV, or augmented so much in this way the price of his benefits. Never did man sell to better profit his words, even his smiles—nay, his looks. Never did disobliging words escape him; and if he had to blame, to reprimand, or correct, which was very rare, it was nearly always with goodness, never, except on one occasion . . , with anger or severity. Never was man so naturally polite, or of a politeness so measured, so graduated, so adapted to person, time, or place. Towards women his politeness was without parallel. Never did he pass the humblest petticoat without raising his hat; even to chambermaids, that he knew to be such, as often happened at Marly. For ladies he took his hat off completely, but to a greater or less extent; for titled people, half off, holding it in his hand or against his ear some



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THE CHÂTEAU OF VERSAILLES IN THE DAYS OF ITS SPLENDOUR: THE PLACE D'ARMES AND THE COUR D'HONNEUR IN 1722

(From the painting by Denis Martin in Musée de Versailles)

instants, more or less marked. For the nobility he contented himself by putting his hand to his hat. He took it off for the princes of his blood, as for the ladies. If he accosted ladies he did not cover himself until he had quitted them. . . .

"He liked splendour, magnificence, and profusion in everything; you pleased him if you shone through the brilliancy of your houses, your clothes, your table, your equipages. Thus a taste for extravagance and luxury was disseminated through all classes of society; causing infinite harm, and leading to general confusion of rank and to ruin."

It must not be inferred that Louis XIV was a fool; he was anything but that. Fond of pleasure, devoted to the chase and outdoor life, he was able to subordinate all other interests when occasion necessitated to his greater love of temporal power. He chose well in the matter of ministers, early recognising that the so-called self-made man is a snare and a delusion, that paradoxical though it may seem, independence is founded on dependence and dependents. In a word, he used the best human materials available and embodied their labours in his own person. He made himself answerable to none; Louis was France and France was Louis. He forced his country to greatness by leavening public opinion with his own activity. It follows that there was nothing approaching a national spirit, the foundation of the only patriotism that endures in the hour of stress and strain.

In his *Mémoires*, Louis says: "I made it a rule to work twice a day, even after dinner, at the despatch of ordinary business, not failing to apply myself at any other time to whatever might arise unexpectedly. I cannot tell you how fruitful I immediately found that resolution. I felt my mind and my courage elevated. I was quite different.

I discovered in myself that which I did not know, and I reproached myself with joy for having been so long ignorant of it. The first sense of timidity that comes with decision caused me pain, but it passed off in less than no time. It seemed to me that I was, and was born to be, king."

Under the able hand of Jean Baptiste Colbert, an astute middle-class financier, with few ideals beyond those usually understood by the word commerce, but who had had the inestimable advantage of service under Mazarin, a great deal was done to repair the ruinous state of the treasury. Trade was fostered, industry revived, colonial companies floated, roads made, canals constructed, harbours built, naval ships put on the stocks, the civil code improved, the debts of the Crown reduced by arbitrary composition, and the revenue more than doubled in ten years. Science, letters and art were encouraged, and Academies of Inscriptions and Medals, of Science and of Architecture were founded by the energetic and oftentimes arbitrary minister. Colbert lives in history as one of the foremost French reformers, Louis as one of the greatest spendthrifts.

"Sire," writes Colbert in 1675, "I entreat your Majesty to permit me to tell you, that neither in war nor in peace have you ever consulted your finances to determine your expenditures, which are so extraordinary that they are certainly without example; and, if you will be pleased to examine and compare the times and years, during the last twenty-five years that I have had the honour of serving you, you will find that, although the receipts have greatly increased, the expenditures have far exceeded the receipts, and perhaps this will persuade your Majesty to moderate and curtail what is excessive, and by this means to put a little more proportion between the

JEAN BAPTISTE COLBERT (1619-1683)

(*After the portrait by Mignard*)

receipts and the expenditures." His Majesty's answer was short and to the point: "The King gives alms in spending largely."

Centralisation at home was the master key of Louis's policy. Free trade was rigorously tabooed, and heavy tariffs were levied on foreign goods. The grander the country the grander the monarch. France was already pre-eminent, but she might become more glorious. Economic progress widened the mental horizon, if not the moral outlook, of the "new Charlemagne"—the term is Bossuet's. Louis turned his attention from the things of peace, into which it must be confessed he had entered half-heartedly, to those of war, which henceforth engaged him to all intents and purposes for over forty years.

The army was reorganised and put on a more business-like basis by the semi-servile Louvois, Minister of War, destined to be Colbert's successful rival in the good graces of Louis. What Colbert did for commerce and the navy, Louvois carried out for the military service with an energy scarcely second to that of the Controller-General of Finance. Foreigners were given an important place in the regiments. The business of soldiers is to fight; provided Louis could secure the best material it mattered nothing to him to what nationality his troops belonged, hence companies of Germans, Swiss, Italians, Walloons, and Irish. He mistook aggression for progression. Lorraine, which since the Peace of the Pyrenees (1659) had been virtually annexed by France, first fell into his hands, with the exception of the solitary fortress of Maral; then he quibbled over the legality of his brother-in-law's claim to the Spanish Netherlands and Franche Comté. These countries Louis asserted to be part of the birthright of his wife, Maria Teresa, the Spanish Infanta, by an old custom which disinherited the children of a

second marriage in favour of those of the first. The Queen was the remaining child of Philip IV's premier union, and her husband thought fit to forget that at the time of the marriage he had agreed to abandon the whole of his consort's claims. His personal justification was based on the fact that Maria Teresa's dowry had not been paid, and on the argument that the possessions he coveted would be a step in the direction of securing for France what had been considered for many generations her "natural boundary" on the north and north-east, namely the river Rhine. As things were she was hemmed in by the Spanish Netherlands, the Bishopric of Liége and the Archbishopric of Treves on the north, by Franche Comté, Savoy and Piedmont on the east.

In 1667 Louis saw fit to try his project. Both the time and the condition of Europe seemed to be propitious. The war which had broken out between England and the United Provinces in March 1665, as a result of various colonial disputes, had placed him in an entirely awkward position, but he had managed to turn it to advantage with wonderful astuteness. By an offensive and defensive alliance arranged three years before it was imperative that the King should go to the assistance of the Dutch. After considerable delay he declared war against England in the early days of 1666. In the following autumn the United Provinces entered into further alliances, thus leaving England more and more to her own resources. Louis saw his opportunity and seized it. He and Charles II came to a secret understanding on the 31st March 1667, whereby the Stuart King acquiesced in the seizure of the Spanish Netherlands by Louis, provided the United Provinces were not helped by the French navy. The appearance of Dutch men-of-war under De Ruyter in the Medway, which Evelyn calls

"a dreadfull spectacle as ever Englishmen saw, and a dishonour never to be wiped off," was an unlooked-for *contretemps*, and had its sequel in the Treaty of Breda, signed on the last day of July 1667. Peace was then signed between England and Holland and England and France. Denmark, which had favoured the United Provinces, also came to terms with the Island Kingdom.

Two months before the signatures had been attached to the Breda parchment, the troops of Louis were on the threshold of the Spanish Netherlands. He declared war against Spain in June, having laid his plans so carefully beforehand that, by reason of existing treaties, the United Provinces could not go to the assistance of Spain, and the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire did not wish to because of a scheme of partition which Louis had already suggested. Portugal, intent on winning independence, had already received assistance from him in her war with Spain, and agreed to continue to fight so as to keep their mutual enemy occupied. England, as noted above, was forced to the ignominious position of a silent onlooker.

The hereditary territory held by Charles II of Spain, a boy of tender years, proved easy prey. The proud land of the Dons was in anything but a fit state to resist the arrogance of Louis, even after the independence of Portugal had been recognised in February 1668. Enfeebled by the protracted struggle of the Thirty Years' War and the vain attempt to reconquer Portugal, with soldiers almost as ragged, tattered, and torn as those who saluted Napoleon Bonaparte when he took over the command of the Revolutionary Army of Italy in 1796, priest-ridden and debased, a gigantic cistern into which was poured the wealth of the Indies only to flow out again into the pockets of aristocratic nobodies, Spain was in a

wretched and thoroughly exhausted condition. Her Golden Age was over. Town after town surrendered, usually without offering serious opposition, and at many places the French were regarded as deliverers rather than as foes. Charleroi, Tournay, Donay, Oudenarde, Alost, and Lille were the prizes of the campaign. Louis, without asserting that he surrendered his consort's claims, then offered to make peace provided he was allowed to retain his conquests or exchange them for Franche Comté and three fortresses in the Netherlands.

The political code of honour was not then what it has since become, and although vested interests are still important factors in statesmanship, we are more inclined to rattle the sword in its scabbard than to withdraw the naked steel. On the part of the United Provinces there was special cause for concern, for the Spanish Netherlands were a barrier state between them and France; and with their keen commercial instinct the Dutch appreciated the importance of Antwerp in French hands as a great centre of trade and a rival to Amsterdam quite as fully as did Louis XIV. They preferred that it should remain in the possession of its present holders, who could boast no Colbert; of two evils Spain was undoubtedly the lesser. John de Witt, the Grand Pensionary, fully realising that Louis was no longer his ally, did all he could to appease him, but without the slightest success. He therefore entered into negotiations with England and Sweden. At this propitious moment Sir William Temple, the representative of the former country at Brussels, unaware that his master was coquetting with both France and Spain, was sent to the Hague as a benevolent physician to pour balm on old sores. He accomplished his mission so satisfactorily that the two governments came to terms in the matter of resisting the ultra-ambitious tendencies of the King of

France. These were embodied in a treaty, and shortly afterwards the powerful Triple Alliance of 1668, consisting of England, Holland, and Sweden came into being. They agreed on common defence if the other were attacked, and bound themselves to compel Spain to accept one or other of Louis's propositions for peace or to make common cause against France should Louis endeavour to withdraw his offer. In this way what may be termed the general European policy of the three chief Protestant Powers for the previous hundred years was reversed, and a helping hand extended to the former Romanist foe. In England, Bishop Burnet tells us, the arrangement "had a very good effect upon people's minds with relation to the King, and disposed them to forgive all that was past, and to renew their confidence in him, which was much shaken by the whole conduct of the Dutch war." Louis had no particular wish to cross swords with the league at the moment. "The pear was not ripe," as one who later occupied his throne, but who was not of his line, said on another notable occasion. As a final stroke Franche Comté was secured by Condé. As there was practically no resistance, it was not brilliant from a military point of view, but it enabled Louis to obtain better terms from the Triple Alliance and also to pose as a generous foe. Thus by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (May 2, 1668), he agreed to withdraw his army from Franche Comté and to retain a number of important fortresses, including Lille, Donay, Tournay, Oudenarde and Charleroi in the Spanish Netherlands. The latter arrangement considerably strengthened the French frontier; and as he dismantled the fortified places in Franche Comté, Louis had reason to be well satisfied with the result of his campaign. Satisfied at the moment that is, for he had other and more daring moves to make on the political chess-board.

The question the French monarch asked himself after the War of Devolution, as it was called, was, "How can I dismember the Triple Alliance and humble the United Provinces which have sought to upset my plans?" In this we see another drastic reversal of policy, this time on the part of France, for hitherto it had been thought well to have the Dutch as friends, and so recently as the times of Richelieu and Mazarin that idea had been fostered. The United Provinces were placed in an extremely awkward position; not without some misgivings had John de Witt, the Grand Pensionary, consented to join hands with Charles II against France. He was to find traits in the character of his alleged ally which were entirely at variance with his professions of friendship. At the same time Louis went skilfully to work, and pretended that nothing was further from his thoughts than enmity between himself and the United Provinces.

In his attempt to woo England from the Triple Alliance the French king found no insuperable difficulty. He had much of what the Stuart king felt the want of most, namely money, and the nation still felt the smart of De Ruyter's stinging insult. Louis therefore attacked Charles in his weakest spot, and England was sold for foreign gold. This infamous bargain is known to history as the Treaty of Dover. Among other provisions, Charles the Profligate agreed to place part of the army[1] and navy at the disposal of *Le Grand Monarque* for an attack on Holland when required in return for a large sum and a share of any territorial spoils that might result. He was also to assist Louis in his claim on the Spanish succession, which the Triple Alliance, priding themselves on their generosity towards France, fondly believed was an affair of the past.

[1] Louis afterwards cancelled this proviso.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE TREATY OF BREDA, JULY 31, 1667, BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN, FRANCE, DENMARK, AND HOLLAND

(*From an etching by Romeyn de Hooghe in the Bibliothèque Nationale*)

Of the secret clauses of the Treaty of Dover the most important was that Charles should re-establish the Roman Catholic religion in England, Scotland and Ireland when occasion offered, for which purpose Louis would allow him £150,000 and the loan of French troops without cost should necessity arise. To complete the bargain the French king thoughtfully presented his ignoble ally with a new mistress, Mlle. Kéroualle, later Duchess of Portsmouth. One wonders if the royal reprobate was haunted at night by the shade of his headless father, or if Clifford, Arlington, Arundel and Bellings had more than ordinary qualms when they remembered that statesmen had perished for perfidy less than theirs. They alone knew of the double dealings of the Dover document.

Buckingham, who was sent to "negotiate" it, played his part as a diplomatist with skill, blissfully unaware that his astuteness was wasted and that everything had been prearranged. Perhaps the blandishments of the Stewarts, the Davies, the Gwynns, the Walters, and others of his seraglio were sufficient distraction to divert the attention of Charles. A dozen demireps can defeat the moral of a dead example.

Sweden also fell a prey to French gold. Leopold I, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, agreed to shut his eyes provided that neither Spain nor the dominions over which he held sway was included in the field of operations. The German States of Münster, Bavaria, Cologne, and the Palatinate bowed before the imperious Louis, or were enticed by the allurements of future aggrandisement or present financial gain. Here it should be noticed that the rulers of the last three possessions were "electors" of the aforementioned archaic and unwieldy Holy Roman Empire, then no longer a feudal State possessing definite political unity, but a motley collection of several hundred

separate territories having widely diverging interests. The policy of those capable of centralisation to any extent was alienation rather than federation in the Imperial sense of the term. A few other principalities and powers preferred the policy of "wait and see." Frederick William, Elector of Brandenburg (1640–88), hard as iron and as unscrupulous as an old-time Jesuit, more in love with the Dutch than with the French because they were Protestants, and an alliance with whom would serve his own ends, prophesied the surrender "of the whole of Christendom" to Louis. With malice aforethought the Great Elector, confident by reason of having secured the independence of Prussia from Poland, stood as firm as a rock. He, like the others, forsook the traditional policy. Instead of leaning towards monarchical France he determined to befriend the republican United Provinces. A treaty between them was sealed in February 1671, to become operative fourteen months later, namely in April of the following year. Spain, hoping to stave off the evil day when the Netherlands would fall to the French, threw in her lot with the United Provinces, as did the Elector of Mainz. The Duke of Lorraine also wished to do so, but was prevented by the appearance of French troops on his territory.

When the flames of war broke out between France and the United Provinces in 1672, the troops employed by Louis numbered considerably over 100,000 strong, under the able leadership of Turenne, Condé, and Luxemburg, whose wonderful military operations continue to be studied by military men. With a few possible exceptions everybody in France regarded the forthcoming campaign as practically settled in favour of Louis even before swords were drawn. It was to be a step towards securing the Spanish Netherlands. Everything appeared to be to his

advantage. Divided councils reigned in the seven Provinces, each of which was to a large extent independent. The supreme authority over the civil and military administration was vested in the States-General, but that fact neither precluded party warfare nor prevented the existence of factions. In marked contrast to the excellent condition of the navy, the army of 25,000 soldiers was scarcely worthy of the name, and the land fortifications were practically worthless.

Louis proceeded in a leisurely way, as befitted so great and glorious a monarch, detached some troops at Maestricht, which was blockaded by the Dutch, and crossed the Rhine after meeting with such feeble opposition that it amounted to little more than a skirmish, although Paris made much ado of it. The French soon proved they could withstand fire by capturing several important towns, including Utrecht and Naarden, but notwithstanding complete success in the three southern Provinces, their movements were slow, and obvious advantages were neglected. They were now to show that they could not overcome water. Their enemy took the drastic measure of cutting the dykes, thereby stopping the progress of the invading forces. Even the weather, which was exceptionally bad, seemed to be on the side of the Dutch. For these reasons, the French failed when they tried to capture Amsterdam, and were equally unfortunate in an attempted landing in Zeeland. Moreover, some of Louis's allies proved chicken-hearted, and the determination of the English to crush the intrepid De Ruyter in Southwold Bay was frustrated. On the other hand, many of the rich Dutch merchants fled, and but for the patriotic instincts of those who loved their country all would have been lost. They based their hopes on the Prince of Orange, great-grandson of William the Silent,

a young man of twenty-two years of age, about whom an influential party had gathered in several of the Provinces, and who held the post of Captain-General. In defiance of the so-called Eternal Edict of 1667, which excluded his house from the government by decreeing that there should be no hereditary Stadholder, the States-General were forced to confer on him the title and duties attached to the office. He asserted his determination "to die in the defence of the last ditch," and the ability and bravery he displayed in the coming contest show the words were not those of a braggart. Shortly afterwards John de Witt, formerly Grand Pensionary of Holland, who had played a noble part and exerted his full strength in an endeavour to make terms with Louis, was assassinated by a mob, together with his brother Cornelius, and Louis returned to France to receive a great ovation at the hands of his admiring subjects. It was formerly held that William had been privy to the atrocious act carried out at Amsterdam, but there being no documentary evidence to sustain the belief, modern historians do not support it.

Although the Emperor Leopold had a secret understanding with Louis, the Great Elector succeeded in gaining his co-operation—in name and men only, as events very speedily proved—to the extent of 12,000 troops, for the avowed purpose of securing the frontiers and repelling the French from German territory. In addition, the Governor of the Netherlands received instructions to take the offensive. The weakness of the alliance is shown by the instructions of Montecuccoli, who is supposed to have been told not to come into conflict with the French if it could be avoided. As a consequence Turenne, with only 15,000 men, was able to keep them from joining the Prince of Orange and the troops of the Netherlands. In June 1673 Frederick

William, disgusted with the whole business by reason of the unsatisfactory policy of Montecuccoli and his successor Bournonville, unable to secure his subsidies from the United Provinces because he had not fulfilled his obligations to them, and not sufficiently strong to enter the conflict single-handed, came to terms with Louis and withdrew from the contest. He undertook not to unsheath his sword against France and her allies, but he entered into no bond that would preclude him from serving the Empire should the Imperial Diet determine upon war against France.

A second League against Louis was formed in August 1673, the United Provinces, the Empire, Spain and Lorraine being the contracting parties. Western Europe was now thoroughly aroused by the aggressive policy of France, and it seemed likely that every State worthy the name would be embroiled in an effort to safeguard the interests of the Powers. A few months later the allies were joined by Denmark, the Elector Palatine, the Dukes of Brunswick and Lüneburg, and in the middle of 1674 by the Great Elector. As Charles II of England had been compelled to make peace with the United Provinces in February of that year, and Louis was in possession of two Dutch towns only, events portended a bright to-morrow for the allies. The ensuing campaign, however, proved anything but hopeful to them. Franche Comté was recaptured by Louis, the Palatinate was devastated, at the eleventh hour the Imperialists were routed in Alsace by the magnificent generalship of Turenne, and the attempt of the Imperialists, Spaniards, and Dutch to pierce the frontiers of France at three different points ended in failure.

The Imperial policy, as in the Napoleonic campaigns over a century later, was vacillating and neglectful.

Indecision was the only measure to which the Emperor committed himself. What was the result? Louis had now won over Sweden, which in the spring of 1675 began to operate against Brandenburg, thus causing the Elector to assume the defensive and to withdraw from active co-operation with the allies—a serious misfortune. Louis sustained a grave loss by the death of Turenne at the battle of Salzbach, July 27, 1675; on the other hand the capture of several important towns as the months wore on, a naval victory, and the defeat of William of Orange at Cassel were causes for rejoicing. There were complications in other directions, however. The union between England and the United Provinces was greatly strengthened by the marriage of Mary, daughter of James, Duke of York, and the young Stadholder. Louis's resources, strained but not exhausted, now told heavily against him, and there was open rebellion in several of the French provinces. He concluded a peace with the United Provinces, known as that of Nymegen, the 10th August 1678, with Spain the 17th of the following September, and with Leopold and the Empire the 26th February 1679. Brandenburg and Sweden, and Denmark and Sweden also laid down their arms. Franche Comté and more than a dozen fortresses in the Spanish Netherlands, important concessions because they gave Louis additional strength on his eastern and northern frontiers respectively, were annexed to France, as well as Longwy, Marsal, and Nancy, in Lorraine; and Freiburg, within the Empire, was exchanged for Philipsburg. Courtray, Ghent, Oudenarde, Charleroi, and a few other places were given back to Spain. Louis undertook not to interfere with the United Provinces, which were left intact, to cede Maestricht to them, and to protect their commercial interests. This provision simply meant that the Dutch had

abandoned Spain, a circumstance of which Louis duly availed himself in none too scrupulous a manner. It is not necessary to detail the territorial compensations of the other countries concerned beyond noting that the Great Elector and Denmark were compelled to restore practically all the spoil they had secured at the expense of Sweden.

Although a formidable coalition had opposed him, Louis now took his place as the most powerful factor in the politics of Europe. He had not achieved the object of his ambition to conquer the United Provinces, but he had added to the territory and strength of France. It was in 1680 that he was officially styled *Louis le Grand*. With consummate craft, and aided and abetted by Louvois, he now sought expansion by means less bloody but scarcely less sinister than a resort to warfare on a large scale. According to the treaty with Spain, the domains, seigneuries, dependencies, and so on, attached to the new acquisitions were ceded to him. Louis took full advantage of the vagueness of the terms, harked back to the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), which the treaties of Aix-la-Chapelle and Nymegen had confirmed, and set up certain French courts called Chambers of Reunion for ascertaining his "rights." What was not definitely ceded was made a dependency, a distinction with little difference. He claimed Alsace, occupied Casale, captured Strassburg, and in 1684 secured Luxemburg, notwithstanding the intervention of the United Provinces and England, although he afterwards withdrew his troops in order to avert another outbreak of war. Leopold I was far too deeply involved in warfare with the Turks in Hungary, whom he finally ousted in 1699, to pay much attention to these events in the west, and the Diet of the Empire concurred in the majority of the reunions, although Louis was encroaching

on the Imperial domains. He was playing his cards for yet higher stakes. He wished to be not merely King of France, but Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. He based his chief hope on the death of Leopold, just as a certain type of person will idle for years because he knows that eventually he will step into a "dead man's shoes."

The Elector of Bavaria had already signified his intention to acquiesce in the arrangement, and Frederick William so far nullified the epithets he had hurled at Louis in 1671 as to come to a private understanding with him in the matter. Spain, alarmed by the continual aggrandisement of France, raised her head towards the end of 1683 by declaring war against her, and retired more crestfallen than before, with the loss of Luxemburg, Courtrai, and Dixmude.

In the following August a truce, known as that of Ratisbon, was arranged between France and Leopold and the Empire, Spain being placed under further heavy contribution in the way of territory. An armistice to continue for twenty years between France and the United Netherlands and France and Spain was also brought about. The "Sun King" appeared to be all-powerful, especially as the decisions of the Chambers of Reunion made before the 1st August 1681 were upheld and were to remain. In all probability he would have continued to be so but for a fatal curtailing of the religious liberty of his subjects.

It is difficult to dissect the make-up of a man of so many parts as Louis. According to the morals of our own time he was unscrupulously ambitious, but we must not forget that at the period with which we are dealing Europe was in a state of transition. The preceding pages of this chapter have shown the restlessness which characterised the seventeenth century, the determination of

LOUIS XIV AS "LE ROI SOLEIL"

(*From a coloured drawing, first of a series made in* 1653 *for a Court ballet in which the King took part. Reproduced from the original in the Hennin Collection by special permission of the French Government*)

every State of consequence to add to its territory on every possible occasion, or, to use an apparent paradox, to consolidate its interests by adding to them. It is Modern Europe in the making. That Louis was the instigator in this matter cannot be gainsaid. It was lack of opportunity and resource rather than want of enterprise and desire that kept his contemporaries from pursuing the same pushing policy to so marked an extent. Each was covetous of his neighbour's possessions. The material wealth of France, plus the ambition of her monarch, set the pace.

It may be within the province of the historian to discuss the relation of ambition to religion, but this is not the place to do so. At least Louis seems to have followed St. Paul's dictum, "be not slothful in business." As to whether he took into consideration the remainder of the text is not for me to say. We cannot penetrate the remote recesses of a man's mind; it is difficult enough to portray his personality with any pretence to accuracy after the lapse of nearly two centuries. One can only surmise from the evidence at our command that *Le Grand Monarque* was interested in religion as a policy rather than as a belief; that the creed of a certain section of the Church appealed to him more than the putting into practice of the simple tenets of Christianity outlined in the New Testament. Perhaps it was the idea of centralisation in national affairs which indirectly led him into the horrible blunder of sacerdotal uniformity and the crime of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, signed on the 17th October 1685, but this cannot have been the only cause. Maria Teresa had breathed her last in 1683, and Louis was now secretly married to Madame Scarron, whom he created Marquise de Maintenon. Her cold austerity created a novel condition at court. Licentiousness gave

place to seriousness, in outward form certainly, and the influence had its effect on the passionate Louis. It was not as though his Huguenot subjects were in a state of fermentation; they were as loyal as they were industrious, content to let bygones be bygones and not given to undue proselytising. The process of persecution was carried out slowly but surely, urged on by that section of the Church which admits no toleration, to culminate in the revocation by Louis of his grandfather's wise act. It was making enemies of perhaps one-fifteenth of the population, and was not to stop at that, as we shall see. Doubtless Louis failed to recognise the bulwark he was erecting around his ambitions. He was certainly misled when he was informed that the measures pursued by priests armed with the sword of the Spirit, and by dragoons furnished with a less subtle weapon, had "converted" the majority of the Huguenots. Louis believed that he was approving the triumph of the Church militant, not to mention that of the Army, when he signed the Revocation. That "religious unity" which La Fontaine welcomed was far from fact, as the speeding of thousands of so-called heretics to England, the United Provinces, Brandenburg, and America speedily testified. "Great oaks from little acorns grow," and the influx of immigrants not only benefited the countries to which they fled but helped, by means of a pathetic object lesson, to swell the ever-increasing volume of public opinion against France. Not every Protestant family was so fortunate as to cross the frontier. Many fathers and sons suffered degradation worse than imprisonment in the galleys, their women-folk were dispossessed of their goods—and more. The Huguenot refugees in England were the historical first cousins of the aristocratic and clerical *émigrés* who crossed the Channel at the time of the Revolution.

the latter occasion, funds were opened for their relief. We are assured by Burnet that "first and last" they numbered between 40,000 and 50,000, "and made a most dismal recital of the persecution. The King did all he could to suppress the clamour of it, speaking publicly against it with a vehemence that savoured of affectation, distributed much money to several of them himself, ordering a brief for a charitable collection for them over the nation, and ordering them to be devised without paying fees, with other great and valuable immunities; but this was too glaring an instance of a cruel and persecuting spirit in Popery to be stifled, and came before the beginning of a Parliament very seasonably to open the eyes of the nation."

No better way of calling attention to the state of affairs in France can be imagined, and though the coming of the Huguenots was not the principal cause of the flight of James II, it unquestionably had an influence on public opinion in England. James II, the very good friend of Louis XIV and the sworn foe of Protestant freedom, was bent on converting his kingdom to Roman Catholicism, with the result that Rear-Admiral Herbert, disguised as a common sailor, was sent by some of the leading Whigs and others to invite William of Orange to deliver the country. James was informed, not once but many times, of certain mysterious preparations being made in Holland. He merely averred that William's armament was for use against Louis, whereas the latter had withdrawn his troops from the frontier for the purpose of a campaign in Germany. Having warned him without success, the French monarch not unnaturally regarded him as a fool, which he proved to be. "The whole of the clergy," writes the Imperial Ambassador at the Court of St. James, "the whole of the nobility, the whole of the people, the whole

of the military and naval forces are, with a few exceptions, hostile to the King, which must necessarily keep him apprehensive on every side." Yet James failed to appreciate what was obvious to the Ambassador until it was too late. "The Protestant wind," to use Burnet's picturesque phraseology, "came at last, which both locked the English ships up in the river, and carried the Dutch fleet out to sea." For the new-comer, "cold and reserved," the English people showed little love, and would have preferred him as Regent with the prospect of a return of James minus his creed. On the other hand, national pride prompted them to take part in the Continental struggle.

While the bloodless Revolution of 1688 was being carried out in England the Sun King betrayed little anxiety to assist his ally against the Protestant Stadholder. He saw good fortune in the decision at the moment, but knew that in future England, in all probability, would be in the van of all combinations against him. He not only occupied the Palatinate, but devastated whole towns by fire and sword. Such wantonness was mere foolishness, and helped to cement Germany in opposition. So long as William occupied the throne there was no likelihood of England's friendship. In Eastern Europe, the Mohammedans were rapidly losing ground, which meant that Leopold was gaining in prestige. Indeed, on the 12th May 1689 the Grand Alliance between the Emperor and the United Provinces was signed, whereby the former not only recognised William as King of England, but undertook to safeguard Holland. William promised on his part to aid Germany against Louis XIV should necessity arise, and, by a secret article, which afterwards proved very important, England and Holland agreed to assist Leopold in the matter of the Spanish inheritance.

It is obvious that it was incumbent on the King of France to keep England employed if possible. Civil war in Ireland, the invasion of England, and such time-honoured schemes were tried without success. The Spanish Netherlands once more became the chief theatre of action. The struggle was long, but William III held on with wonderful tenacity, and it must be confessed that Voltaire was right when he called him the "Stadholder of England and King of Holland." Peace was slow in coming. The first overtures were made by Louis, who, with resources running low, was anxious to break up the Grand Alliance and to begin again when time and funds were more propitious. Things were not quite so bright in the south-east. With the defeat of the Turks had come the annexation of Hungary and Transylvania by Leopold, which considerably altered the balance of power so far as the Empire was concerned. The Peace of Ryswyk was concluded on the 20th September 1697, and treaties were signed by France, England, Spain, the United Provinces and the Emperor. With few exceptions Louis restored nearly all the places he had won since the Treaty of Nymegen, recognised William III as King of England, and Anne, second daughter of James II, and a keen Protestant, as heiress to the throne. Lorraine was restored to the deposed Duke, French troops evacuated the right bank of the Rhine, and Louis not only withdrew his candidate for the electorate of Cologne, but relinquished the claims of his sister-in-law, the Duchess of Orleans, to the Palatinate in consideration of a substantial sum of money. France had Pondicherry and Nova Scotia restored to her. Facts arranged in this semi-mathematical way can convey but little real information to the reader as to the extent of the territory surrendered or added; and there is, of course, a number

of minor details in every treaty which cannot figure in a popular history, otherwise our pages would be overloaded and the broad outline of events cast into shadow instead of relief. At first glance it may seem as if Louis was acting the part of political philanthropist. A closer inspection reveals his apparent goodwill in the nature of a stroke of policy. A sportsman seeing larger game rise when he is about to shoot smaller quarry sometimes prefers to save the one to make sure of the other. So it was with Louis and the Peace of Ryswyk, which said not one word regarding the all-important problem of the Spanish succession.

CHAPTER II

LOSSES AND DISHONOUR

"Monarchy is destroyed when the prince, directing everything to himself, brings the country to the capital, the capital to his court, and the court to his own person." MONTESQUIEU.

THE feeble health of the childless and brotherless Charles II of Spain, his constantly recurring illnesses, especially his almost fatal collapse in 1696, behoved the King of France to be on his guard. The Empire had recovered somewhat from its anæmic tendency, which was all the more reason why Louis should take every precaution to prevent his ambition in the matter of Spain from becoming a vain abstraction. Spain and the Empire had not been united since 1556, but it had been the almost invariable rule for the Austrian Habsburgs to choose their brides from Spain, usually the eldest infanta. As there was no Salic Law forbidding a woman from ascending the throne of Spain, and as Louis XIV had renounced his wife's hereditary rights and Leopold was the son of an infanta, who had not done so, and the husband of another, his claim was by no means to be despised. Neither the King nor the Emperor aspired to the crown for themselves or their immediate heirs. They knew perfectly well that the other Powers would never consent to such a concentration of interests, which in addition to their own kingdoms would include Spain, a large portion of Italy, the Spanish Netherlands, certain portions of North Africa, the Indies, and huge tracts in America. The hope of Leopold was based on his second son by his

second marriage, the Archduke Charles; of Louis on his younger grandson, Philip of Anjou.

The Court of his Catholic Majesty speedily became a hot-bed of intrigue. One Grandee favoured France in the matter of the succession, another Austria, a third the Duke of Savoy, a fourth Joseph Ferdinand, Electorial Prince of Bavaria, a child whose mother was Leopold's daughter, and whom the King himself favoured; a fifth a fellow patriot—or himself. Just as a dying animal brings birds of a certain kind to the near vicinity, so the sorely-stricken condition of Charles hastened the carrion crows of diplomacy to Madrid. Like Napoleon, who also had designs on Spain, Louis had alternative schemes should the first and more important miscarry. This, of course, was the placing of a Bourbon prince on the throne. Unlike Napoleon, whose main hope was the aristocracy, Louis found that his chief support was the people. Whatever happened it was necessary to propitiate England and the United Provinces, for their extensive trade in South America and the Levant would be involved should a nominee of Louis rule the vast Spanish realm. Negotiations between the Count de Tallard, who represented Louis, and William began and were continued in the utmost secrecy, the King taking neither the Privy Council nor Parliament into his confidence. His aims were to prevent the supremacy of either of the two great Powers, and to avoid a further resort to arms, for which he was not ready. He therefore compromised by agreeing that the three claimants should share the Spanish dominions, the provisions being formulated in the first Treaty of Partition, signed the 11th October 1698. Spain, the Indies, and the Spanish Netherlands were given to Joseph Ferdinand, or to his father, Max Emanuel, should the former predecease him; Milan to the Archduke Charles;

the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, Tuscany, Finale, and Guipuzcoa to the French Dauphin. Thus was an Empire divided before Charles II breathed his last. The news filtered through to Spain, and weak though he was the King did his best to undo such perfidy by making a will in favour of Joseph Ferdinand, leaving him the crown in undiminished splendour. This skilful move was unavailing owing to the sudden, perhaps sinister death of the Electorial Prince of Bavaria in February 1699. Unfortunately William's authority had weakened in England; there had been a great deal of discussion as to a standing army, which he saw was absolutely necessary if his adopted country was to maintain her importance in international affairs, and Parliament had won the day. Louis and William were still on the political see-saw, but the former was uppermost; the latter was in the ignominious position of supporting the other without the chance of shifting his seat and bringing Louis to the ground. Eventually it was decided by both Louis and William III that the claims of Max Emanuel did not hold good, because his son had died before having entered into possession of his territory.

Louis became more arrogant in his demands. The Dauphin was not only to have Naples and Sicily and the other places already enumerated, but Lorraine, whose reigning Duke was to be indemnified by Milan; or if there were objections, some other province serviceable to France. Spain, her colonies, and the Netherlands were to go to the Archduke Charles. This was the second Treaty of Partition, signed on the 25th March 1700, to which the Emperor gave no assent, and against which the still-reigning Charles II hurled threats of alliance with Leopold. Louis was not precipitate; he was quite willing to wait. On promising that he would

not join in issue with Spain, although he had held an armed threat in the way of a small army within easy distance of the frontier, the Emperor made the *amende honorable* by consenting to keep his troops out of Spain and Italy. The agreement was not to be of long duration. Charles II died on the 1st November 1700, and a certain section of the nobility was astonished to find that he had made a will leaving the whole of Spain and her dependencies to Duke Philip of Anjou, second son of the Dauphin. On no account was the State to be divided. Was man ever more severely tempted than Louis at this moment? Must he renounce the crown on behalf of his grandson and the opportunity to make his House more powerful, as the provisions of the Partition Treaty enjoined? Torcy, the French Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, was not on the side of the angels when he summed up the case in the blunt language of a diplomatist who appreciated the value of time when matters were urgent. "The same courier who has been despatched to convey the news of the will to France," he avowed, "will proceed to Vienna; and the Spanish nation, without hesitation, will acknowledge the Emperor's second son as their king. The House of Austria will then unite between father and son the power of Charles V, a power hitherto so fatal to France!"

There were thus weighed in the balances the obvious aggrandisement of the House of Bourbon should Louis abide by the dead king's testament, and the likelihood of a bitter war with Spain and Austria combined should he claim that portion of the dominions allotted to him by the Treaty of Partition. It was morally certain that William would not view the passing of the Spanish Netherlands into the hands of Louis's grandson without lifting his voice, not to say his sword. Had he struggled

for years to prevent the Spanish Netherlands from passing under French influence to no purpose! The previous chapter is superfluous if it has failed to prove this fact.

Louis, Pontchartrain, the Duc de Beauvilliers, Torcy, the Dauphin, and Madame de Maintenon debated long on the vexed points of a vexed issue. The Dauphin was particularly vehement, and voiced his son's interests in no uncertain way, for which he may be forgiven. At last Louis made up his mind. He would accept the crown for his grandson; the Partition Treaty should be regarded as so much wasted parchment.

The scene which took place when Louis made known his decision was dramatic. He fully appreciated the value of a fine setting. There was an interview with the successor to the throne of Charles II in the King's private cabinet, followed by the homage of the Spanish Ambassador to his new sovereign. Outside the assembled court was waiting. Then the folding-doors were flung open, and the *Grand Monarque* addressed the brilliant company. "Gentlemen," he said in measured tones, "permit me to present to you the King of Spain. His station called him to that crown; the late King has called him to it by his will; and the whole nation has fixed its desire upon him, and has eagerly asked me for him. It is the will of Heaven; I have obeyed it with pleasure." On such an occasion one must have a short memory for treaties, overlook the obvious untruth in "the whole nation," and disregard the cynicism of the last sentence. The speech certainly lacked nothing in brevity whatever was wanting on the score of veracity. It told just enough—one fact. As a final effect Louis turned proudly to the Duke of Anjou and addressed him in two stately sentences which summed up kingcraft as he wished it to be understood. "Be a good Spaniard," he conjured; "that is

your first duty: but remember that you are a Frenchman born, in order that in this way the union between the two nations may be preserved. By this means you will be able to render both peoples happy and preserve the peace of Europe."

Louis was nothing if not grasping. This proclivity was to shatter the noble ideal set forth on behalf of others in his last words. Intentional or otherwise, he pursued a policy of pin-pricks. The one which hurt most was his decision that Philip V of Spain, his grandson, should eventually succeed to the throne of France. To the Powers this meant but one thing, namely, the union of the countries most concerned. A more vital stab followed. A number of fortresses in the Spanish Netherlands were taken possession of by Boufflers, Marshal of France, and garrisoned by French troops, thereby menacing the United Provinces, whose sons had fought and bled to keep France a reasonable distance from the frontiers of their country. The Spanish Netherlands gone, there would be no protecting wall. If Louis did not actually refuse explanations of this totally unexpected *coup d'état* he certainly refused concessions. Evidently his encroaching habits had not been entirely abandoned. Moreover, ships for the French marine were put on the stocks at Cadiz, thus heralding an alliance of the two navies, and various decrees were made anent the Spanish colonial trade, in which both England and the United Provinces were deeply interested. England arose as a giant out of sleep, shook off her lethargy, and rallied round the defender whom she had affected to despise owing to his Dutch favourites, his ambitions for a standing army, and his extravagance in certain unworthy directions. Whigs and Tories were alike eager for hostilities. The populace read with avidity the pamphlets

of Daniel Defoe, the immortal author of *Robinson Crusoe*, and of other less eminent scribblers. There was a war fever. When the pockets of a nation are affected, a resort to gunpowder is usually regarded as the only effective remedy. William, already marked out by death as an early victim, was no longer the brave leader who had captivated the Dutch in 1672, and the English sixteen years later. So far as military prowess was concerned, he was a broken reed. Fortunately for England there has been almost invariably "a man of the moment" at times of crisis. On this occasion John Churchill, Earl of Marlborough, stood ready, the potential Commander-in-Chief in Holland, the future hero of Blenheim and of Malplaquet—the one capable man.

William worked with feverish energy on the very brink of the grave. The Emperor was willing to wage war, and had every reason to be. The United Provinces had much to lose and nothing to gain; Prussia was bound by treaty to Leopold's interests. Some of the German principalities joined hands with the allies, others with France, whose closest friend was Bavaria. It was to be a big fight, and if victory went with the allies the barrier towns were to be restored to their rightful owners. The Emperor was to have every jot and tittle of the Italian possessions of Spain, England and the United Provinces, any conquests which might be made by them, and the West Indies. Further, there was to be a complete understanding in the matter of commercial interests with France. On these terms the second Grand Alliance, necessitated by the brobdingnagian appetite of Louis XIV for other people's possessions, was signed at the Hague on the 7th September 1701, the day following the death of James the Exile at St. Germain. Louis took the opportunity to recognise that monarch's son as King of

England, Scotland, and Ireland. It was a foolish thing to do, this setting of the Treaty of Ryswick at nought, had Louis wished to show the slightest inclination towards a pacific settlement of the question which seemed likely to embroil the greater part of Western Europe. The allies were quite prepared to listen to overtures from Louis. They never came.

Although a minute study of the many phases of the twelve years' War of the Spanish Succession will well repay the historical student, such a survey is unnecessary in the present volume. The drama occupied a vast theatre. There was fighting in the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, and Italy. But the old and tried warriors who had served France so well were gathered to their fathers or their nerveless hands had no longer power to grasp the sword. Condé and Turenne were missing from the legions of Louis; Marshal Catinat proved that he had lost his former prowess, and was succeeded in the early stages of the war in Lombardy by the "short-geniused and superb" Villeroi; and Vendôme embittered the more able and enterprising Villars. The allies were better served by the indomitable Marlborough and Prince Eugene: the latter originally destined for the ecclesiastical habit and not the soldier's uniform. William III, the apotheosis of national and religious freedom, who had staked his all in resisting the arrogance of France, died at the old palace of Kensington in March 1702. Had his shade brooded over Flanders during 1702–3 it would have been without rest, perhaps without hope. Wellington's predecessor was as distrusted by the allies as he was supported by "good Queen Anne"; and although Venloo, Ruremonde, Liége, Bonn, Huy, and Limbourg fell, the divided councils lent weight to the force of the enemy. It was not until Marlborough with consummate boldness

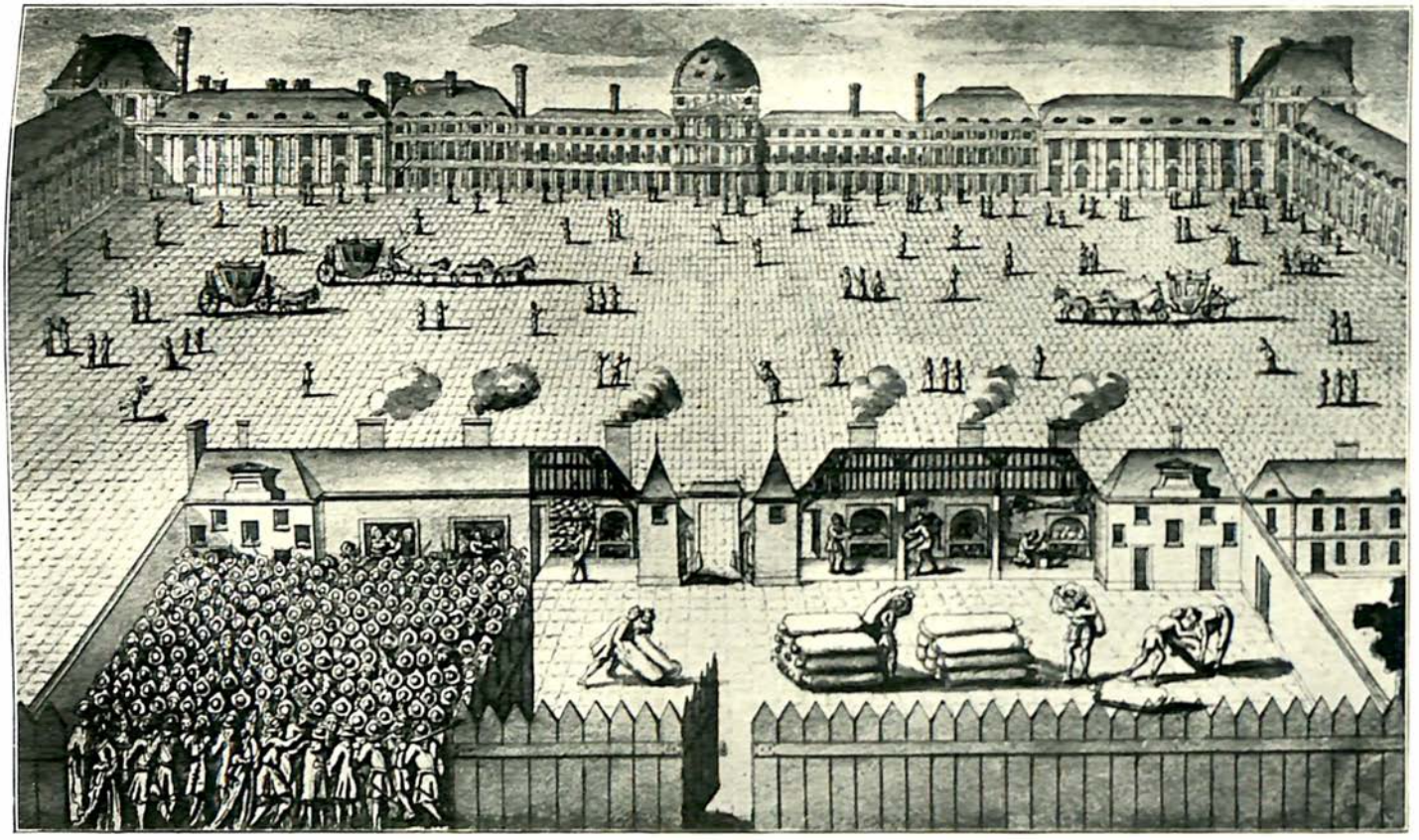
abandoned the cockpit of Europe and advanced against the French and Bavarians before Donauwörth that he was able to inflict a decisive defeat on the enemy. With the object of bringing the Elector of Bavaria to terms, the victor overran the country much in the same way as Louis had laid waste the Palatinate. In the vicinity of the village of Blenheim the armies of Marlborough and Eugene contested those of the Elector, Marsin, and Tallard. The first two fled, the third surrendered. It was a master-stroke of consummate importance which blazed a trail to further conquest. Germany was evacuated; the enemy retired behind the Rhine—the resort of the defeated. In the meantime Ruvigny, Earl of Galway and Huguenot *émigré*, commanded the English forces in Spain, while the Duke of Berwick, Englishman and natural son of James the Exile by Marlborough's sister, commanded those of France and Spain.

Marlborough now turned his attention to the Spanish Netherlands, but it was not until May 1706 that he had an opportunity to administer a crushing blow. Ramillies is a name emblazoned on more than one standard in the British Army, and deservedly so. The battle which took place near Namur freed the Spanish Netherlands. Antwerp, Ghent, Bruges, Ostend, Menin, and other places either capitulated or were captured, leaving Louis with two strongholds only, namely Namur and Mons. The Emperor was so grateful for Marlborough's services that he asked him to become Governor-General of the Netherlands, which he felt obliged to refuse owing to the jealousy of the Dutch. Having given England a king, they apparently did not wish to reciprocate by allowing their neighbours to accept a British Governor-General.

The war continued in Spain and Italy with disastrous results to Louis. Philip was driven from Madrid, and at

last France made overtures for peace. He, *le Roi Soleil . . .!* The allies refused to stay their hands. Success is seldom the parent of magnanimity. But the man who could write, "Well! let us perish together," when Chamillart, who controlled both the finance and the war departments, wished to send in his resignation, was not likely to sink into utter ineptitude. Like Samson, he would rather pull down pillars and be buried in the ruins than admit failure.

Saint-Simon refers to the military record of 1706 as "a history of losses and dishonour," as well he might do; and he tells us that Louis personally exercised measures of economy on account of the financial strain on the country. He spends only 25,000 *louis* in presents, which is 10,000 *louis* less than the ordinary figure. Madame de Montespan has to be content with 8000 *louis* instead of the 12,000 *louis* she had hitherto received. "The want of money," adds Saint-Simon, "made itself felt so much at this time, that the King was obliged to seek for resources as a private person might have done. . . . The necessity for money had now become so great, that all sorts of means were adopted to obtain it. Amongst other things, a tax was established upon baptisms and marriages. The tax was extremely onerous and odious; the result of it was a strange confusion. Poor people, and many of humble means, baptized their children themselves, without carrying them to the church, and were married at home by reciprocal consent and before witnesses, when they could find no priest who would marry them without formality. In consequence of this there were no longer any baptismal extracts; no longer any certainty as to baptisms or births; and the children of the marriages solemnised in the way I have stated above were illegitimate in the eyes of the law. Researches and rigours in respect to abuses so prejudicial



ROYAL RELIEF WORKS IN THE TIME OF FAMINE

France being afflicted with famine in 1662, the King ordered the construction of bake-houses and the distribution of bread to the people in the court of the Tuileries—a royal sop to public discontent at the consequences of continual warfare.

(*From an old drawing in the Bibliothèque Nationale after medals of the year*)

were redoubled therefore; that is to say, they were redoubled for the purpose of collecting the tax.

"From public cries and murmurs the people in some places passed to sedition. Matters went so far at Cahors, that two battalions which were there had great difficulty in holding the town against the armed peasants; and troops intended for Spain were obliged to be sent there. It was found necessary to suspend the operation of the tax, but it was with great trouble that the movement of Quercy was put down, and the peasants, who had armed and collected together, induced to retire into their villages. In Perigord they rose, pillaged the bureaux, and rendered themselves masters of a little town and some castles, and forced some gentlemen to put themselves at their heads. They declared publicly that they would pay the old taxes to king, curate, and lord, but that they would pay no more, or hear a word of any other taxes or vexation. In the end it was found necessary to drop this tax upon baptism and marriages, to the great regret of the tax-gatherers, who, by all manner of vexations and rogueries, had enriched themselves cruelly."

The year 1707 showed the silver lining of the cloud. Eugene's plan for the invasion of France viâ Toulon failed, Philip retrieved his position, Marlborough made no headway other than in his diplomatic dealings with the energetic Charles XII of Sweden. Providence again seemed to be on the side of his most Christian Majesty, a not unusual feeling even with people who boast a less significant title when their earthly affairs show signs of improvement. Of tremendous practical importance at the moment was the obtaining of a loan from banker Bernard when the war-chests and every other coffer of the realm were wellnigh empty. Ghent and Bruges, retaken by the French in 1708, were held for a brief time only, and were snatched

away by the allies. The battle of Oudenarde, fought on the 11th July 1708, the brilliant effort of fatigued troops, preceded the possession of Lille, one of the most important cities of *la belle France*. But for the conservatism of his colleagues with the allies the Duke would have marched upon Paris without delay.

We shall have occasion to examine the condition of French home affairs a little later. For the moment it must suffice to note that corn and money failed. Misery reigned supreme. Peer and peasant asked themselves what benefit was likely to be conferred on them for all this fighting? Could the aggrandisement of one justify the degradation of millions? They began to think of "rights," that most abstract and at the same time most vital of things pertaining to the commonwealth. Louis did not even attempt to temporise. He bluntly informed his enemies that Philip V would be content with Naples and Sicily, that he was willing to make great concessions provided France was not left worse off in territory than when he ascended the throne. For a second time he asked peace. The allies, swollen with pride and puffed up at the thought of having brought the erstwhile conqueror to his knees, refused concessions. Their point of view was not exactly that of the bully of the playground who, after felling his enemy must needs kick him as he lies on the asphalt, but rather that of Shylock. They required their pound of flesh weighed before their eyes and guaranteed. Louis went so far as to offer to cede the whole of his grandson's inheritance, but there was more than a suspicion of uncertainty as to the *bona fides* of his proposal. The allies refused to be appeased.

In the French army one commander alone seemed capable of exertion, the blunt, swaggering Villars, who wrote that his ragged soldiers could do without coats or

shirts provided they had bread. His good spirits never deserted him. After the hard-fought battle of Malplaquet (11th September 1709), which heralded the surrender of Mons, so great was the loss of the allies that he wrote, "If God should grant us another such defeat, our enemies would be destroyed." A man of his type is a host in himself.

Louis has recorded what he would have done had Marlborough pushed on to Paris. "I reckoned," he writes to Villars, "on going to Peronne or St. Quentin, gathering there every disposable troop, wherewith to make a last effort with you, that we might perish together: for never could I remain a witness of the enemy approaching my capital." One cannot but admire the ardent spirit of the aged monarch as he watched matters go from bad to worse. He was conquered but unconquerable. In his determination to fight on he was nobly supported by the nation, which offered its blood and treasure freely rather than see the country disgraced. Overtures were again made by Louis in November 1709, and conferences held at intervals until the following July. Everything ended in the "words, words, words" of Shakespeare.

Then was fulfilled in no small degree the fervent prayer of Mme. de Maintenon, "God has brought us to that lowest point of ruin, from which it may be hoped He will retrieve us by a sudden turn." It came suddenly, without anticipation, giving pith and marrow to the old saw, "It is the unexpected that happens." Marlborough was no longer the consummate master of warfare, perhaps not even entire master of his own actions. Affairs at home had tended to undermine his confidence in himself. Although Douay capitulated in the last week of June 1710, Béthune at the end of August, and St. Venant and

Aire in the autumn, nothing further of importance occurred before the armies, following the usual practice, retired to winter quarters. Paris was as far off as before. On the Rhine and in Piedmont the war was moribund; in the Peninsula there were victories without conquests. England, as represented by the House of Lords, forgetting or ignoring past services, refused to second the usual vote of thanks to the great soldier-statesman. The war-supporting Whigs had been ousted by the peace-loving Tories in the autumn election of 1710, which meant the inevitable reversal of previous policy. What had once been white was declared black, including the Duke, for Abuse is one of the acknowledged benefits of the Party System. Not that Marlborough was a Whig, although he had chosen the ministry whose latter course, coupled with the non-resistance machinations of Sacheverell, had helped to bring about his own degradation. In the opinion of the populace his ambition had already overreached itself when he sought to be created Captain-General for life. The Duke of Shrewsbury became the Queen's political father-confessor, Marlborough's bad-tempered wife quarrelled with the "godly, praying idiot," as she called her Majesty, and the life of the hero of a hundred battles was to all intents over, so far as his political career was concerned. Yet he was still to fight a few more battles.

There was soon every reason for replacing the sword in its scabbard. The Emperor Joseph I died on the 17th April 1711, and was succeeded by the Archduke Charles.[1] To use the able summing-up of an eminent modern historian: "It was hardly possible that the Grand Alliance, which had been formed in order to prevent a cadet of the Bourbon family from ascending the Spanish Throne, should continue the war to reunite the dominions

[1] The Emperor Leopold I had died on the 5th May 1705.

of Charles V under the head of the Austrian Habsburgs. Joseph's death thus provided the Tory Ministry with an additional justification for their determination to bring the war to an end, and to meet the growing feeling that an annual expenditure which had steadily risen in the course of ten years from nearly four to nearly seven millions sterling had become intolerable."[1] It will thus be seen that the common denominator of statecraft is money.

The persevering Torcy again put forth efforts for a cessation of hostilities by means of a skilful agent in London, but although the Abbé Gaultier set to work in 1710, it was not until the dawn of 1712 that negotiations were begun by the allies and France. Some slight idea of the amazing intricacies of statecraft, as disclosed by such minor details as geography and chronology, may be gained from the following significant facts. The general Congress for the discussion of the terms of peace was formally opened at Utrecht on the 29th January 1712, and its meetings were continued at intervals until the 11th April 1713, the day on which France concluded peace with Great Britain, the United Provinces, Savoy, Portugal and Prussia. The Emperor Charles VI signed his treaty with France at Rastatt on the 7th March 1714, which was accepted by the representatives of the Holy Roman Empire at Baden (Switzerland) on the 7th September 1714. Spain came to terms with Savoy on the 11th April 1713, with Great Britain on the 13th July 1713, with the United Provinces on the 26th June 1714, and with Portugal on the 6th of the following February. The total of this sum of involved fact is known as the Peace of Utrecht, and the date usually assigned is 1713, although the last treaty was signed in the second month of 1715. Generalisations are suspect in history, and rightly so,

[1] *Cambridge Modern History*, Vol. V, p. 429.

because they are usually incorrect. They involve the fatal half-truth; the less is included in the greater, and is therefore overshadowed by it. As a general rule such a comprehensive title as that alluded to is to be avoided, but a concrete fact is clearer than an abstract definition; hence the general acceptance of a single comprehensive name and date. For a similar reason we must give a composite view of the more outstanding features of the many involved Articles of the Peace. Louis's grandson kept the crown for which he had struggled so desperately, minus the Spanish Netherlands and the Italian possessions. His colonies were retained, but Philip was precluded from the heirship of France. The new Emperor was awarded the Spanish Netherlands (henceforth to be known as the Austrian Netherlands), Naples, Milan, and Sardinia. Sicily went to the Duke of Savoy, who also added Nice to his possessions. England, the prime mover in the war, received Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, the Hudson Bay territory, and Gibraltar, and came to an understanding with Spain in the matter of commerce. Moreover, Louis recognised Queen Anne, and agreed never to interfere with the Protestant succession. By what is known as the Third Barrier Treaty, made between the Imperial Government and the States-General, the United Provinces obtained several fortresses in the Austrian Netherlands, part of the cost of the garrisons being borne by the Imperial Government, and an insignificant increase of territory.

There is nothing of marked importance to note about the campaign which was progressing during these negotiations beyond the battle of Arras and the capture of Bouchain. The last day of December 1711 is noteworthy, because Marlborough was dismissed. In the following year Eugene and the Dutch continued their

warfare against Louis, with much disaster to themselves; and when the United Netherlands dropped out Austria and certain States of the Empire waged a half-hearted opposition until peace proposals were made during the November of 1713.

In order to complete our miniature survey of modern Europe in the making, we must not forget that countries other than those already mentioned were also in a state of transition during the last years of the reign of *le Grand Monarque*. The whole of the Continent was surging like the waves of a troubled sea. The liberal notions of Peter the Great (1672–1725), due in no small degree to his travels in Germany, Holland, and England, forced Russia into a more commanding position than she had hitherto achieved. It seemed as though Sweden was to shake off her lethargy under the adventurous Charles XII (1697–1718), whose youth gave no higher promise than that of the future Frederick the Great, but his quixotic efforts conferred no lasting benefits on his country. Powerful with the sword, he wielded a weak sceptre. The Hero King performed extraordinary deeds of prowess during the course of the Northern War, defeating Denmark, conquering Poland, and invading Saxony in turn. He went too far when he set out for Moscow, with the intention of striking a blow at the heart of the great Slavic Empire. It ruined him as assuredly as a similar plan undermined Napoleon's *régime* in 1812, one hundred and three years later. After a disastrous defeat at Poltawa he made good his retreat into Turkish territory, where he spent several years urging the Sultan to join his cause—a vain hope which led to the neglect and consequent rapid decline of his northern kingdom, to the advantage of the enemy. On his return he again came to blows with the saner and less mercurial Peter, who would

have preferred an alliance to a state of war. Charles died as he would have wished, with his face towards a castle he was besieging, during his second futile effort to conquer Norway in 1718. Of Denmark little need be said. The attempt to copy the splendours of the Court of Versailles and Colbert's measures for the fostering of trade was not altogether successful, and rendered the country extremely badly off financially. This lack of money the disastrous Scanian War with Sweden (1675–79) did not tend to mend. The alliance of Frederic IV (1699–1730) with Russia, Saxony, and Poland launched Denmark in the Northern War, an altogether futile effort so far as the last-mentioned Power was concerned. Prussia had undertaken to serve the Emperor in the War of the Spanish Succession within certain limits, in return for which service Leopold recognised Frederick III, the Great Elector's son, as king. The prestige of the Hohenzollerns had increased amazingly under the guidance of the Great Elector. When, as a lad of twenty, he had come into his inheritance, Brandenburg was a mere cypher in the politics of Europe. In the forty-eight years that followed he made his country a power to be reckoned with. He gave it prosperity, than which there is no firmer basis for patriotism, established a standing army, and introduced many needed reforms. Unable to obtain the extension of territory which he so ardently sought, his closing days were embittered by the perfidy of the Austrian Court over the acquisition of Schwiebus. His successor's claim to greatness rests chiefly on having become the first King of Prussia—or as he began to style himself, King in Prussia—and father of the sour-tempered, stoical Frederick William, who increased the army from 38,000 men to 84,000 highly-disciplined soldiers. Of this bequest his son Frederick II made the greatest possible use.

CHAPTER III

THE SETTING OF THE SUN KING

"If the peasant enjoyed the possession of his soul, it was simply because he could not put it up for sale." OMER TALON.

IT is to be feared that we have already devoted sufficient space to this rapid and necessarily cursory review of the Age of Louis XIV. Nevertheless, something remains to be told if we wish to follow the long chain of events leading to the most awful cataclysm of modern history. Let us frankly admit that in the seventeenth century war was regarded as a necessity. Whatever thought-movement towards peace there may have been was a mere pebble on the beach. Civilisation, the slowest of all human processes, had not evolved the delicate refinement of arbitration. A resort to arms was then the only chivalrous way of settling national disputes. It naturally followed that when a "benevolent despot" possessing a consuming passion for glory ruled a country the risks of long and bloody strife were increased tenfold. To govern a State well, to give its inhabitants the blessings of peace and prosperity, was not sufficient fame for a man of such ardent temperament as Louis XIV. Had he preferred the pruning-hook to the sword we very much doubt whether his neighbours would have allowed him to pursue the arts of peace. Europe was in a state of transition, conflict was "in the air," as we say, and if a raid was not made on the territory of other folks the chances were that the latter would take the initiative. On the whole the French nation nobly supported their

king. Napoleon admitted that the French people are "the most intellectual people in the world," and also vainglorious; "they like their vanity better than bread." Again, there was no doctrine which Louis more steadily inculcated than that of the divine right of kings, particularly of his own special privilege in this direction. We know with what delightful inconsistency he set this article of belief aside when he recognised William of Orange as King of England. The "divine right" of James II disappeared as mysteriously as Pepper's Ghost. Other instances might be furnished, but there is sufficient food for thought in the present example.

What of the nation at large, the hewers of stone and drawers of water, during the long seventy-two years of Louis's reign? How did the pomp and majesty of Versailles, the waving of banners and the clash of arms affect them? What amount of reflected glory was theirs? What percentage of happiness entered the windowless hovels of the countryside? Vauban, who worked out a clever scheme to unify the cumbersome and unjust system of taxation which was slowly but surely sapping France, thus sums up the situation as it stood in 1707, and there is no reason to suspect his testimony: "From all the researches that I have been able to make during several years of close application, I have come to the clear conclusion that one-tenth of the people is reduced to beggary and does as a matter of fact live by begging; of the nine-tenths remaining, five cannot give alms to the first tenth because they are very little better off; of the other four-tenths three are in far from comfortable circumstances; in the tenth that still remains there cannot be more than 100,000 families."

It is fairly obvious that a man who wished to embody the State in his own person, and was continually at war

VOICY LEGRAND
ROY
LOVIS XIIII.
IL donne Audiance, iusques au plus pauure de ses suiets, pour terminer promptement leurs procez & differans.
Salomon, s'assit sur le Throsne, pour Iuger ces deux pauures femmes, qui plaidoient à qui seroit l'Enfant:
Nostre Monarque l'imite parfaitement, & nos grands Rois & Empereurs, Charles-Magne, entreautres, & Louis Auguste
Ils donnoient des Audiances publiques comme luy, ils y estoient obligez par loy expresse, & l'auoient fait publier par tout le Royaume.

Louis XIV gives Audience to the Poorest of his Subjects

(From an engraving authorised by the King about 1668. Probably issued to counteract the discontent and complaints that were beginning to make themselves heard against the cost of the glories of the "Sun King")

had to leave certain of the less important departments of his administration almost exclusively to the care of others. Louis could not overlook the workings of every section of the huge government machine, however much he desired to do so. To this day "the parish pump" remains an object of ridicule with certain sections of the community who do not happen to live in the neighbourhood of that useful article, but all their cavillings cannot disprove the patent fact that to the villagers most concerned an accident to their water-supply savours of tragedy. Local government under Louis was essentially weak; it was bound to be so with centralisation as the key-note of his system. Provincial *Parlements* and Estates still met, but their power was abrogated to no inconsiderable extent by the King's *intendants*, who represented the royal authority much more than the people. The middle-class Britisher who growls at heavy taxation should have lived in the days of *le Roi Soleil*, when the payment of the obnoxious *taille* was exacted from those who could afford it least, and exemption was enjoyed by those who could best afford to pay, namely the nobility and clergy, and the court and government officials. The *capitation*, or property tax, introduced when the war with the Grand Alliance was going against France, was skilfully evaded by many of the favoured classes, at least for a time, and eventually became an intolerable burden to the masses. The unprivileged paid to the last *sou*.

It is only fair to state, however, that Colbert had effected many tangible reforms in the national finances. By clearing out the *partisans*, who had been willing to advance money to the Government for the right to collect certain taxes on their own account—which meant that they made a more or less legitimate profit on the transaction—he ended many flagrant abuses and raised more

revenue. One of Colbert's dearest wishes was to abolish the detestable *taille*. Although this was not to be, he managed to lighten the burden by decreasing the huge amounts previously levied and enforcing payment from individuals and districts hitherto exempt. After his death the finances went to pieces, and the *partisans* became as powerful as ever.

Not that the peasant was worse off in France than in neighbouring States; if anything his conditions were better. He could buy land from the lord of the manor if he so desired and had sufficient financial resources, but in various places the grain raised had to be ground at the lord's mill and baked in his oven. Sometimes a certain proportion of his crops or of his herds had to be given to the original holders, and there were other arrangements by which the latter obtained money, such as bridge and ferry tolls. Should the land be sold, one-fifth of its value was usually required by the denizen of the manor. The game laws, against which Carlyle pleads so eloquently, precluded the sons of the soil from killing the birds which destroyed his crops. Partridges were infinitely more important than peasants. Nothing was allowed to interfere with the breeding of the former for the sport of the *seigneurs*. Previous to Louis's reign a noble might murder a peasant with impunity. The Sun King put a stop to such a proceeding, which he rightly regarded as abrogating the authority of both the Crown and of Justice. If the *taille* was not paid when demanded, goods were seized or soldiers billeted on the place. Another unjust system of raising funds was the time-honoured salt-tax (*gabelle*), the sale of salt then being the monopoly of the French Government as tobacco and matches are to-day. Instead of a standard price different rates were charged, with the result that smuggling was carried on wherever

opportunity presented itself. In 1689 tea, coffee, and chocolate came under the same category. Unjust financial measures led to risings in the Boulonnais, Gascony, the Vivarais, and Brittany. The Revolution was already in the making.

Contrasted with the pleasures and indulgence which obtained elsewhere the divergence is most marked. During the war of the Spanish Succession Saint-Simon notes the beginning of the end in the army: "The luxury that had inundated the camp," he writes, "prevented the generals from living with the officers, and consequently from knowing or judging of their several merits. There was no longer that general converse respecting war, its adventures, its science, triumphs and defeats, in which the young were wont to glean experience from the mouths of the old. Now, the young could speak but of play and women, the old but of forage and equipments. The general officers lived together or alone; the Commander-in-Chief saw even them but in the crowd, whilst his privacy was consumed in writing and despatching couriers, and the details of the war were left to three or four subalterns, who perhaps knew nothing about it." We have noted the strenuous endeavours of the sleepless Colbert for reform, but even he was unable to take a new broom and sweep clean the litter of old laws, customs, and internal frontier dues which encumbered the path of progress. There were literally scores of different legal systems, and so many and varied were the customs lines that France resembled a group of foreign countries rather than a homogeneous State. For instance, customs lines separated Brittany from the provinces of Normandy, Maire, Anjou, and Poitou. All these survivals of mediævalism hampered commerce and social intercourse. Is it small cause for wonder that Lady Mary Wortley Montague noted in a

letter describing a journey from Lyons to Paris in 1718 the "miserable starved faces and thin tattered clothes" of the peasantry? Less than a generation later she was able to detail a change for the better: "France is so much improved, it would not be known to be the same country we passed through twenty years ago. . . . The French are more changed than their roads; instead of pale yellow faces, wrapped up in blankets, as we saw them, the villages are all filled with fresh-coloured lusty peasants, in good clothes and clean linen. It is incredible what an air of plenty and content is over the whole country." Arthur Young had a very different tale to tell during his tour in 1787, from which a brief extract may be made, although we shall have occasion to refer at greater length to his entertaining and extremely valuable *Travels*. He is referring more particularly to the province of La Sologne, where "the fields are scenes of pitiable management, as the houses are of misery. Yet all this country highly improveable, if they knew what to do with it; the property, perhaps, of some of those glittering beings who figured in the procession the other day at Versailles. Heaven grant me patience while I see a country thus neglected—and forgive me the oaths I swear at the absence and ignorance of the possessors." Again: "Pass Payrac [Lot], and meet many beggars, which we had not done before. All the country, girls and women, are without shoes or stockings; and the ploughmen at their work have neither sabots nor feet to their stockings. This is a poverty that strikes at the root of national prosperity, a large consumption among the poor being of more consequence than among the rich; the wealth of a nation lies in its circulation and consumption: and the case of poor people abstaining from the use of manufactures of leather and wool ought to be considered

as an evil of the first magnitude. It reminded me of the misery of Ireland."

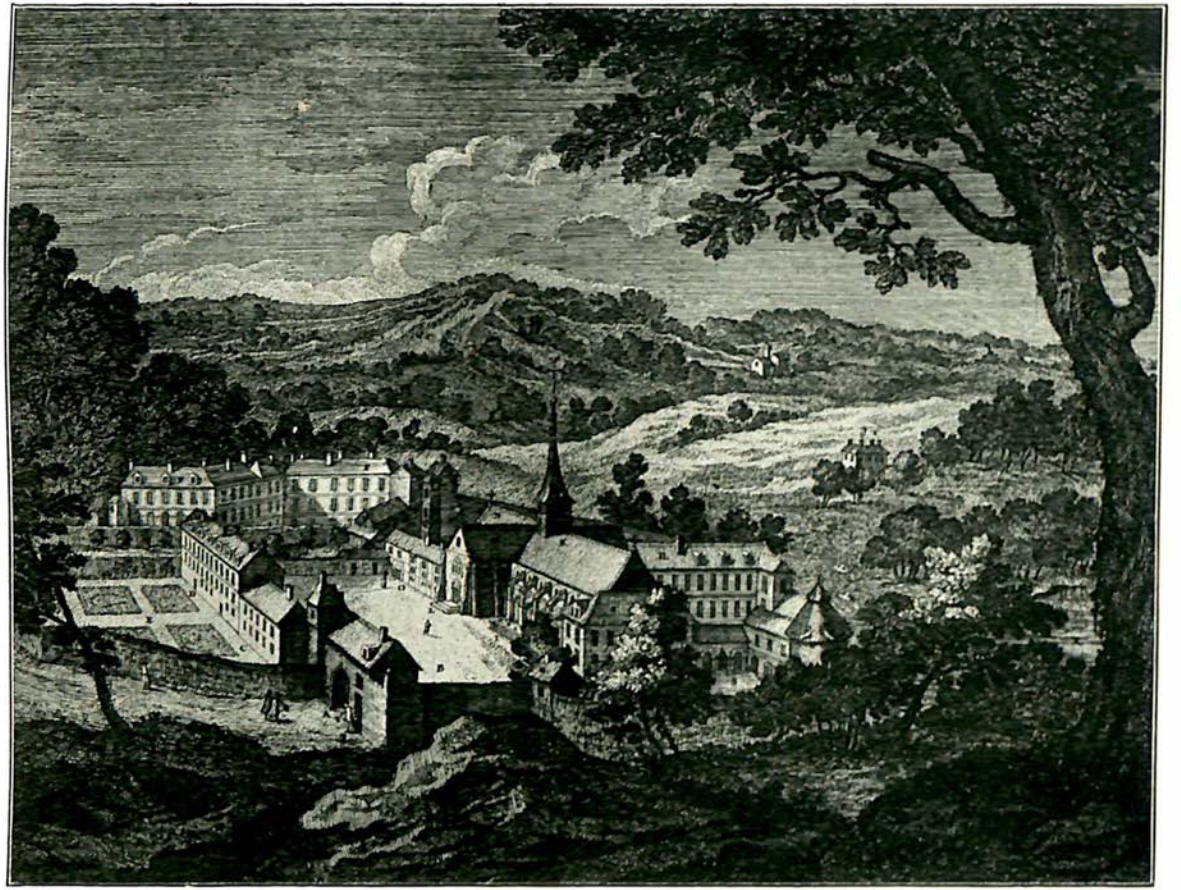
Justice was corrupt. Towards the end of the reign of Louis XIV the government was so badly in need of money that mayors, aldermen, and similar municipal officers bought their positions for life, to be inherited by their sons after them. It requires no exceptional gift of imagination to understand what gross abuse arose from so unsavoury a method of increasing resources. Lotteries were legitimate financial measures; even the clergy were mulcted by forced loans.

We have seen how Louis endeavoured to reign over the conscience as well as over the person of his subjects, and how this idea brought about the infamous Revocation of the Edict of Nantes; an injustice quite in keeping with his craze for centralisation, and indeed part of the plan.

The King knew, or should have known, that persecution is the very life-blood of the Church; that there is no standard conscience in spiritual matters any more than there is a standard coin recognised by every country throughout the world. Louis was to find different schools of thought in the Roman Catholic Church, to discover that unity was lacking in the very institution to which he wished all his subjects to adhere. Jansenism, called after its founder Cornelius Jansen (1585–1638), taught that the grace of God alone enabled men to perform good deeds and gain redemption. So independent a doctrine was bitterly resented by the Jesuits, and Louis saw in it the seeds of political strife, a considerably more important matter than a mere theological controversy. Louis silenced the guns of the leaders of the movement for a time, but they burst out afresh at no distant date. Madame de Longueville, the King's cousin, Fénelon, Saint-Simon, all became enamoured of the tenets of the

new branch of the old faith which was causing the trunk so much trouble. Madame de Maintenon herself is suspect as having secured the Archbishopric of Paris for Noailles, who had a decided leaning towards Jansenism. A Papal Bull, known as *Unigenitus*, was hurled from Rome, but it found determined opponents, many of whom sought refuge in the United Provinces. The Old Roman Catholic Church, founded by the sometime Professor of Divinity at Louvain University, and Bishop of Ypres, is still a spiritual force, though a small one numerically.

The lovable and independent Fénelon, and the eloquent Bossuet, did much to humanise the iron rule of the Vatican. Fénelon, whose teachings had more lasting effect, was tutor to the Duke of Burgundy, eldest son of the Dauphin, whose passionate youth he trained to the quietness of a lamb. Indeed, his protégé once astonished the Court by declaring that "the King was made for his subjects, and not the subjects for the King," a most heterodox opinion when we remember the saying attributed to Louis XIV. Fénelon's *Télémaque*, the main theme of which is the adventures of the son of Ulysses in search of his father, is also an argument against a centralisation of power, and a treatise on the right of a nation to share in public affairs. In a way Fénelon may be termed a precursor of Rousseau, although he did not go nearly so far as that herald of the Revolution. He was not the type which makes martyrs; with him discretion was ever "the better part of valour." This accounts for his meek acceptance of the Archbishopric of Cambrai, which meant exile from court. Fénelon and Bossuet, hitherto friends, became the most violent antagonists, though their warfare was mostly conducted by pamphlets. Fénelon was a mystic, Bossuet a man



THE ABBEY OF PORT ROYAL, THE HOME OF JANSENISM

(From an engraving by Bocquet in the Hennin Collection. Given by special permission of the French Government)

of fact—the two seldom agree. There is a winsome appeal about the former not associated with the latter, and it is recorded that when Marlborough and Eugene were marching to the field of Blenheim, the estates adjoining Fénelon's palace were left undisturbed by their troops. It was a fitting tribute of blood and iron to the apostle of Quietism, that "soft and savoury sleep of nothingness" which alone enabled the Divine to pour out His effluence.

The Age of Louis XIV is one of the most brilliant annals of French literary history, and the King, Colbert-like, endeavoured to foster it. Corneille, Molière, Racine, La Fontaine, and Boileau are names which still live, and are likely to do so. Not that comedies and tragedies were the only productions from facile pens. Mother Church contributed her quota through Pascal, Bossuet, Fénelon, to mention a trinity of super-excellent writers and neglect a score of less well-known names.

The closing years of the Sun King's reign presaged a stormy morrow. He had lived too long. Signs were not wanting that the days of absolute monarchy were numbered, that the splendour of France had been purchased at too great a price. The multitude, however miserable, always applauds the conqueror—until he fails. There is something extremely pathetic in the King's dying speech to his great-grandson, a boy of five years, who may be forgiven if he did not appreciate the full value of the testimony. "You are soon to be king of a great realm," he said. "What I commend most earnestly to you is never to forget the obligations you owe to God; remember that to Him you owe all you are. Try to keep peace with your neighbours: I have been too fond of war; do not imitate me in that, nor in my too great expenditure. Relieve the people

as much as you can. Try to do all that I have not been able to do." Evidently Louis the Absolute was not blind to his own faults when it was too late to repair the mischief he had wrought. In the following chapter we shall see the return swing of the pendulum.

With the passing of the Sun King on Sunday, the 1st September 1715, France took on new hope. To say that Louis was mourned would falsify history. Rather was he applauded for having accomplished something worthy at last. "This King," said Massillon during the course of his funeral oration in the Sainte Chapelle at Paris, "the terror of his neighbours, the amazement of the universe, the father of kings; this King, greater than his great ancestors, more magnificent than Solomon in all his glory, has also learnt that all is vanity."

CHAPTER IV

THE AGE OF DISILLUSION

"We hold our Crown from God alone. The right of making laws belongs to ourselves alone; we neither delegate it nor share it." LOUIS XV.

THERE is a certain amount of cold, matter-of-fact truth in the old saw that "history repeats itself," and there is likewise a law of retribution which is often a fitting corollary. Louis XIV accepted the testament of Charles II of Spain on behalf of his grandson and defied the Treaty of Partition, consequently the throne was gained by breaking a most solemn promise; scarcely was his body cold before the careful arrangements he had made for his own succession were set at nought by a flagrant breach of trust. According to the Royal will Philip, Duke of Orleans, the heir-presumptive and nephew of the late monarch, was to act as Head of the Council of Regency during the minority of Louis XV, a by no means robust child. He was to be assisted in his task by a council of the old ministers, the majority of whom belonged to the party of the Duke of Maine, one of the late King's numerous natural offspring by Madame de Montespan. Legitimacy of necessity had a right over the claims of the bastard even when officially "legitimated," but Louis had arranged that Maine should be the child king's guardian and have command of the Household troops. In addition, he had issued an edict in 1714, declaring the Duke of Maine and the Count of Toulouse heirs to the throne should his direct line become extinct. Everything was done with a view to the continuance of his own policy.

Orleans, ambitious and unscrupulous, cared nought for wills and wishes, royal or otherwise. By means of a judicious distribution of money and vague promises of a restoration of some of its confiscated rights, the *Parlement* of Paris was persuaded to place what was virtually supreme power in his hands. So much for the behests of a dead monarch however powerful he may have been when the rich warm blood of life coursed through his veins.

The Regent was a man spoiled in the making. His tutor had been of ill-repute. On reaching manhood he was not allowed to exercise to any extent whatever ability he possessed; and his wife, an illegitimate daughter of Madame de Montespan, had been chosen for him. Fond of pleasure, he plunged into reckless dissipation. He deliberately mocked at religious observances, and when sober preferred to dabble in science rather than to think seriously of the welfare of the kingdom. Dame Rumour whispered that the death of Louis's only son, of the Duke of Burgundy and his wife, and also of the succeeding Dauphin was due to poison administered by him; an allegation entirely without proof, and consequently all the more popular with a certain section of the nation.

Notwithstanding his preliminary high-handed policy, Orleans had certain liberal instincts in marked contradiction to those of Louis XIV. These he chose to display at the beginning of his *régime*. State Secretaries gave place to half a dozen councils in which men of all shades of opinion found a place, to the gratification of the noblesse; and he released the imprisoned Jansenists in defiance of the Jesuits. But religious difficulties and differences were as nothing compared to the complex problem of finance. At the end of the "glorious reign" of *le Roi Soleil* France was over 2,400,000,000 *livres* in debt. Almost every subterfuge had been tried to raise

money. It was proposed that the States-General be called, not to discuss national bankruptcy, already mooted by Saint-Simon as the only possible way out of the slough of financial despond, but to formally decree the measure. This proposition Orleans peremptorily refused to entertain, perhaps for personal reasons, in addition to a certain pride which he displayed anent the country's obligations. Yet it was obvious that a thorough reorganisation of the national monetary resources was eminently necessary. Partial measures, ever the most unsatisfactory, were suggested. The value of money was changed; interest on the National Debt was fixed at four per cent.; financiers who had lent money to the Government at heavy interest were made scape-goats, and several thousands of them were ordered to refund large sums. Those who escaped the inquisition suffered in other ways, their rates of interest being reduced in some cases and money on loan confiscated in others. It remained for a clever Scotch adventurer, named John Law, to propose a scheme for the financial rejuvenation of the kingdom, a plan be it said in which he implicitly believed. He had gone to some pains to study banking, had written a book on finance, and incidentally had filled his pockets by gambling. Law "hitched his waggon" not to a star, but to the unlimited use of paper money, the security for which was the property of the State. He had also a Socialist's belief in the State as a trader, with the result that a grandiose Company of the West was started, changed later to the Company of the Indies by the absorption of two other trading concerns. Law speedily became the financial magnate of France, with considerably more influence in the State than any modern financier and trust maker can expect to gain. Eventually his concern made an offer for the taxes in return for an annual payment of

52,000,000 *livres*. This was accepted. Things went on in great style for a time, paupers becoming rich men and everybody seemingly pleased with the altered aspect of affairs. Eventually the enterprising Scotsman was made Controller-General of Finance, a post which an exile from his native land, on account of a duel which had terminated fatally for his opponent, could scarcely have anticipated in his wildest dreams. There was a boom far and away exceeding anything known in the twentieth century. Then the bubble burst, as did England's South Sea Company, and the bank stopped payment. France was left worse off than before the coming of Utopia. Law went down with his house of cards, dying in Venice nine years after, a pauper, still unconvinced of the futility of his mighty projects and assuring himself that none of his schemes proceeded "from dishonest motives."

Spain, under the guidance of another adventurer, Alberoni by name, seemed to have recovered somewhat from her anæmic ways and policy. Alberoni saw a chance of placing Philip V or his little son Don Carlos on the throne of France, and worked in and out of season for the furtherance of his ambition. Unfortunately for him the Regent was served by Dubois, his old tutor, whose lack of morals was balanced, from a worldly point of view, by a wonderful tenacity of purpose. Largely through his instrumentality a Triple Alliance between France, England, and Holland was formed in January 1717. This was followed a little later by the seizure of the ministry of Foreign Affairs by Dubois after he had secured the dismissal of the Councils. It was not long before the Emperor Charles VI joined the other Powers to resist Alberoni's ambitions, Sardinia and Sicily having been seized by him as a preliminary to further aggrandisement. A set-back was experienced by Spain

THE "BUBBLE" BOOM IN THE COMPANY OF THE INDIES UNDER JOHN LAW'S GUIDANCE

The Rue Quinquempoix was the scene of all the trading and excited speculating in scrip which was one of the results of Law's financial operations. After the engraving by Humblot.

in the defeat inflicted on her navy by Byng in the summer of 1718. In the following April a French army crossed the Pyrenees. The year 1719 also saw the nullifying of the Spanish naval power by the English and French fleets and the occupation of Sicily by the Austrians. Alberoni fell with his adopted country, and on the declaration of peace his royal master joined the Coalition. When, in July 1721, the insistent Dubois, now Archbishop of Cambrai, secured the Cardinal's red hat, he felt that his ambition was consummated. He did not live long to enjoy the distinction which he had coveted most, for he fell from his horse, and died on the 10th August 1723, predeceasing his patron the Regent by four months.

Louis XV was then thirteen years old, "of age," according to royal reckoning in France, but scarcely capable of assuming the reins of the kingly office—a statement which might be applied with equal truth to his later years. He never "grew up" in the real, manly sense. The vacant post of First Minister was occupied by the Duke of Bourbon, a great-grandson of the illustrious Condé. The laws of heredity certainly did not obtain to any marked extent in this particular case. His jealous disposition soon manifested itself. At whatever cost the great rival house of Orleans must be debarred from the throne. The solution of the problem depended on the King having an heir. As he was engaged to the Infanta of Spain, a tiny tot of six, no consummation of this hope was likely for some years. Evidently the Spanish match must be broken off, and a more suitable arrangement made. Bourbon's choice decided on Maria, daughter of Stanislas Leczinski, the exiled king of Poland. This subtle plan seemed likely to offend none save Spain. At the time of his marriage Louis XV was sixteen

years of age, his consort twenty-three. The ceremony took place in September 1725. Nine months afterwards Bourbon, notwithstanding all his intrigue and scheming, was dismissed, to give place to Fleury, Bishop of Fréjus and the King's tutor. The aged prelate—he was seventy-three—had hitherto preferred to fill the less conspicuous position of the "power behind the throne," but he was by no means devoid of ambition, and when he became First Minister he speedily proved that he possessed an amazing stock of reserve force. He was popular, and the country recognised whatever merits he had, although in directions other than those of diplomacy his talents verged on mediocrity. Either as a direct cause of his arbitrary rule, or because he had the assistance of such keen and able financiers as the famous brothers Pâris, the sluggish blood of commercial France again began to flow a little less languidly. In one respect, however, even Pâris Duverney failed. In 1725 he had endeavoured to make both the privileged and non-privileged orders pay a tax of two per cent. on all revenues. The outcry against it proved that the patriotism of both clergy and nobility had no cash basis, with the result that the *cinquantième* had to be withdrawn by Fleury. Voluntary contributions, never stable at the best of times, were substituted. If the prelate offended the Paris *Parlement* by refusing to support its claims in ecclesiastical matters, and sent into exile no fewer than 139 magistrates—whom he afterwards pardoned, be it added—he unquestionably displayed considerable skill in his manipulation of such foreign affairs as directly affected the prestige of his country.

Philip V of Spain was deeply offended at the insult levelled at him by the rejection of his daughter. He entered into an alliance with Austria, hitherto regarded

as his arch-enemy, with the direct intention of alarming France and securing the eventual succession of his son Don Carlos to the Duchies of Tuscany and Parma. The Emperor was not averse to such an arrangement, more especially as his maritime ambitions had aroused the dislike of England and Holland. The schemes outlined in the ensuing Treaty of Vienna were very far reaching in extent, and involved the recovery of the Netherlands, Alsace, Franche Comté, and Lorraine on the part of the Empire, and of Roussillon, Cerdagne, Lower Navarre, and Brittany on that of Spain—a fairly extensive programme. The Pragmatic Sanction declaring Maria Theresa, daughter of Charles VI, the Emperor's heiress was supported by Philip, who exacted, among a plethora of other promises, the recovery of Gibraltar and Minorca, two most important strategic positions, from England. Ere long the allies secured the assistance of Russia and Prussia, although the latter at first supported France, and prepared to encounter France, England, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden, a truly formidable coalition. The Emperor's ruling passion was the Pragmatic Sanction, and he broke his alliance with Spain because he saw that if war was averted England and France might conceivably guarantee it. Such ungenerous conduct was simply playing into the hands of Fleury. Philip speedily came to terms with France and England, two of the Powers he had hoped to crush. On the death of the Duke of Parma in 1731, Charles seized the much-coveted Duchies, but was prevented from occupying them permanently by the timely interference of England and Holland. These Powers guaranteed the succession of Maria Theresa provided Piacenza and Parma were handed over to Don Carlos, which was done.

Two years later Poland lost her king, and Stanislas

was reinstated by an overwhelming majority, the monarchy being elective. The exile was not to find the path of a popular hero strewn with roses; rather was it littered with thorns. Another candidate was in the field, namely Augustus III, Elector of Saxony, the late King's son, who had gone skilfully to work by meeting Charles VI in the matter of his pet hobby, the Pragmatic Sanction, and by promising Courland to the Empress Anne of Russia when he was safely on the throne. Such connivance on the part of Austria and Russia simply meant that they would be embroiled with France, which was, of course, attached to the candidature of the King's father-in-law. Fleury, never at any time an advocate of war, preached peace; Chauvelin, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, advocated war. The latter won his case, but failed to support Stanislas; as a consequence Augustus secured Poland. In her war with Austria France was far more successful. Aided by Sardinia and Spain, both countries being anxious to gain territory in Italy at the expense of the common enemy, she made good headway on the Rhine, and under Villars, Coigny, and Broglie won several battles in the north of Italy, although the vacillating and two-faced policy of the King of Sardinia prevented anything approaching a decisive victory. Naples and Sicily fell easy prey to Spain. France and her allies scored heavily by the subsequent adjustment of interests in 1738. Francis, husband of Maria Theresa, surrendered his Duchy of Lorraine and received the reversion of Tuscany; Stanislas was solaced to some extent for his loss of Poland by the dukedom of Lorraine and Bar, with the proviso that on his decease it should be ceded to France; Don Carlos secured Naples, Sicily, and Elba on the understanding that they were to be independent of Spain; Parma and Piacenza went to Austria, and Sardinia was

A Caricature of 1728 on the Financial Situation

(From a line engraving in the Hennin Collection. Given by special permission of the French Government)

rewarded with territory in the Milanese. The Powers, including Prussia, made every manifestation of sincerity as to the famous Pragmatic Sanction.

In the next chapter we shall be able to appreciate the value of the pie-crust promises so cordially extended to the Emperor, a pitiful monomaniac who failed to take into account the wilful disregard of States and monarchs for their own words when "policy" dictates otherwise.

CHAPTER V

TWENTY YEARS OF WAR

"What are fatigue, illness, and dangers in comparison with glory It is so mad a passion that I cannot conceive why it does not turn the brains of everybody." FREDERICK THE GREAT.

BOTH the Emperor Charles VI and King Frederick William died in 1740, but it is something more than a mere coincidence that Austria and Prussia were to be sworn enemies for the two following decades. The two dominating personalities in the arena were the immediate successors of the dead rulers. Maria Theresa, a spirited young woman of twenty-three years of age, inherited the Habsburg territories as Queen of Hungary and of Bohemia and Archduchess of Austria; Frederick II, an equally energetic but far more unscrupulous individual, had not yet celebrated his thirtieth birthday when he ascended the throne of the monarch whose valuable services had secured the guarantee of the Pragmatic Sanction by the Empire. That the recognition of Maria Theresa's claims by the Powers was so much waste paper soon became abundantly evident. Spain, Saxony, Bavaria, and Sardinia all had alleged claims to the Austrian possessions, and the new King of Prussia regarded himself as entitled to a part of Silesia. That he was in no humour for negotiations, although he actually did make certain overtures to Maria Theresa, is borne out by a letter he penned to Voltaire six days after the decease of the Emperor. "This death," he writes, "deranges all my pacific intentions, and I believe that in the month of June we shall

have more to do with gunpowder, soldiers, and trenches than with actresses, ballets, and the theatre. It is the moment of the total change of the ancient political system: it is the stone which crushed the image composed of four metals which Nebuchadnezzar saw."

In addition, there was the question of the Imperial title to be settled. Austria wished the Queen's consort, Francis of Tuscany, to be Emperor. Prussia and France put forward Charles Albert, Elector of Bavaria. So far as Frederick was concerned, this matter was of small importance at the moment, and without declaring war he boldly occupied Silesia, "except two wretched forts, into which the officers of the Queen of Bohemia have *very imprudently* thrown some troops." Such are his words in a letter to George II of England on the 30th January 1741. It was not until the middle of that year, when Frederick had won the battle of Mollwitz, that France became embroiled. Fleury, still holding his former opinions—and rightly, as events proved—was on the side of peace, but he was nearing ninety years of age, and a new favourite had begun to be talked about by the nation. It was Belle-Isle this, and Belle-Isle that, and it was confidently anticipated that the elder bearer of the name, a grandson of financier Fouquet, would lead France to victory in battle as he had led her to triumph in the diplomatic field by means of the Treaty of Vienna. Wiseacres foretold that the Elector of Bavaria, if he became Emperor, would be the tool of France, that the Austrian Netherlands would fall to her share of spoil, and that the Habsburg monarchy would be perceptibly weakened. Therefore it was clearly her duty to repudiate the Pragmatic Sanction, and to resort to arms if necessary. France, Spain, Bavaria, Prussia, Poland, and Saxony leagued against Maria Theresa, who in the pre-

liminary stages had only Russia and Hanover to rely upon for support. The Empire, with the exception of the last-mentioned State, preferred neutrality. Soon the heiress of the Austrian throne found herself alone, for France saw to it that Hanover remained quiet, and Sweden kept Russia sufficiently occupied. But this arrangement existed for a short time only. England, hitherto the ally of France, supported Maria Theresa, as did Holland. George II was, of course, Elector of Hanover. As such he had some reason to fear the ambition of Frederick, and in addition Hanover had long supported the House of Habsburg. The Empress Elizabeth, who had come to the throne a few days after Maria Theresa, was also approached by England, with the result that Russia threw in her lot with Austria.

In September 1741, Maria Theresa ceded Lower Silesia to Prussia, and Frederick and Saxony withdrew, followed by Sardinia. Maria Theresa had now an important ally in the field, for her Hungarian subjects, hitherto considered almost more trouble than they were worth, took up arms in her behalf after she had aroused them to enthusiasm by the restoration of certain of their political privileges. Belle-Isle, when not engaged in diplomacy, conducted the campaign with spirit, but the French were driven from Bavaria. When his army recrossed the Rhine at the beginning of 1743, it was a miniature precursor of the ragged rabble which survived the disasters of the Russian expedition of 1812, and Maurice of Saxony occupied much the same position as Ney on that occasion. Only one-fifth of the Frenchmen who had started out to do such brave things survived the sword and the severe winter and returned to tell of their humiliation. During 1742 things had also gone badly in Italy, Sardinia deserting the alliance, as mentioned above, and Spain making

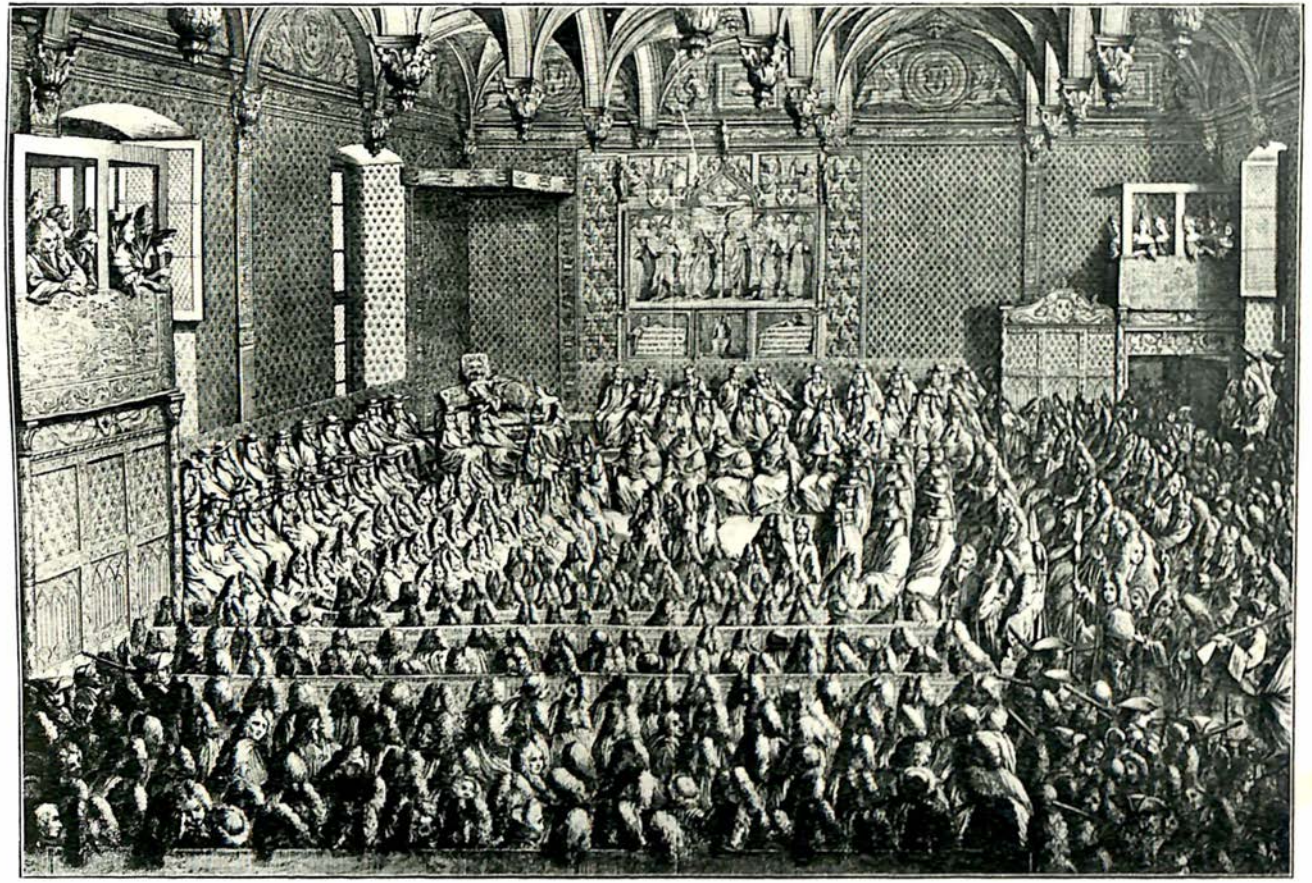
no headway whatever. The new year opened with the death of Fleury, who had no successor, because Louis XV, in a momentary flash of enthusiasm and energy, announced that he would be his own First Minister. It witnessed Holland thrown into the balance with Austria and her allies, saw the defeat of the French by the English, Hanoverian, and Dutch army at Dettingen, at which George II was present, and the retreat of Louis's troops from Germany. It directly led to Sardinia and Saxony cementing an alliance with the noble daughter of the late Emperor. This arrangement was by no means to Frederick's liking, who saw in it, among other possible projects, a likelihood of the reconquest of Silesia. The immediate result was a rival league consisting of France, Prussia, the Emperor Charles VII—who had been elected and crowned on the 24th January 1742—Sweden, Hesse Cassel, and the Elector Palatine. The new campaign was carried on in the Netherlands, Bohemia, and Italy, but it was Frederick who fought the great battles. Peace was made between him and Maria Theresa by the latter ceding Silesia to him on his acknowledging her husband, Francis, Grand Duke of Tuscany, as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire—a triumph for both prompted by England. France still pursued her course, conquering Belgium, Savoy, and Nice. Yet when a congress for the discussion of the articles of peace was opened at Aix-la-Chapelle in the spring of 1748, she gained but little, although France and England restored their colonial conquests. Parma, Piacenza, and Guastalla went to Don Philip of Spain; Sardinia shared in the spoil by absorbing certain Milanese districts, and Frederick, as we have noted, definitely secured the province he desired "more than much fine gold," plus Glatz. Once again the Pragmatic Sanction was guaranteed, as was the

Hanoverian Succession by the French King, who also undertook to befriend Charles Edward no longer. The Emperor Francis I was recognised by all parties.

Here we must note a peculiar and significant fact. At the beginning of the campaign of 1744, Louis, having awakened from his dreamy ways for the nonce, decided to accompany the two French armies under Noailles and Maurice of Saxony into the Austrian Netherlands. His sudden burst of energy must be attributed to the enthusiasm of his latest mistress, the Duchess of Châteauroux, who went with him. Success attended the early exploits of the French arms, alloyed by the disconcerting intelligence that Alsace was being devastated and that the Hungarians had crossed the Rhine. This meant that troops must be detached at once to guard the French frontier. Louis therefore made his headquarters at Metz, where he was stricken by disease. His death appeared imminent, his true repentance not so sure. The Queen left with haste for her husband's bedside; the Duchess departed, much to the King's chagrin. That the majority of the French nation knew of their monarch's indolence and vice is doubtful. However that may be, the saints were invoked for his speedy restoration to health. When Heaven answered their prayers, they bestowed on Louis the ambiguous title of *le bien aimé*. That he did nothing to deserve even respect is proved by his whole career.

> "The devil was ill,
> The devil a saint would be."

The old couplet applies with much force to the successor of *le roi soleil*. He speedily forsook the paths of righteousness for the embraces of the Duchess. Who was the chief sinner no mortal man can say, but by the strange irony of fate, his mistress died in the following



THE YOUNG LOUIS XV HOLDS A BED OF JUSTICE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS PARLEMENT AT PARIS, SEPTEMBER 12, 1715

(Engraved after a drawing made on the spot by F. Delamonce in 1715)

December. He mourned her loss less than three months, and then found consolation in Madame d'Étioles, a woman of charm and discernment despite her humble origin, who afterwards became Madame de Pompadour.

It is a damning and terrible indictment which a modern historian makes against the woman who betrayed her honour for ambition, and yet one feels, after a prolonged study of the period, that it is perfectly just. "She ruled for twenty years," says Kitchin;[1] "under her baleful influences what little vigour the monarch had shown while he was guided by Madame de Châteauroux died utterly away: the king became a mere cypher in the State; men would have forgotten his existence, but for some horrible scandal which now and then, like poisonous bubbles rising in a still and noisome pool, betrayed the foulness underneath. Silently, but none the less surely, corruption and deadly vices were working out the ruin of France." The country, in the words of Professor Grant, "never knew a more fatal female influence."[2]

Although peace had been restored in 1748, the intense rivalry of France and England overseas continued. In India France was the rising power; in America she had Canada and claimed Louisiana, while England had an enormous sweep of territory, including Baffin Land, Rupert's Land, Newfoundland, and the coastline from Labrador to the south of Georgia. Unfortunately the British possessions were extremely narrow, and did not extend into the interior.

This expansion westwards the French endeavoured to prevent by fortresses placed at intervals along the rivers Ohio, Mississippi, and the Saint Lawrence. Louisburg,

[1] *A History of France.* By G. W. Kitchin, D.D., F.S.A. (Oxford, 1894, third ed., revised), vol. iii. p. 427.

[2] *The French Monarchy* (1483-1789). By A. J. Grant, M.A. (Cambridge, 1900), vol. ii. p. 203.

on Cape Breton Island, in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, had been captured in the year of Fontenoy and of the revolt under the Young Pretender, which meant the loss of so important a strategic position on the part of the French that it has been called "the Gibraltar of the New World." But the latter still continued to improve their position and to build forts. Wars and rumours of wars filled the thoughts and determined the actions of the colonists; collisions constantly occurred. Nearer home the islands of Santa Lucia, Dominique, St. Vincent, Tobago, and the Antilles, all in the Caribbean Sea, were constant bones of contention owing to the pretentions of the French, who regarded them as their possessions, whereas they were supposed to be neutral.

Like the Peace of Amiens (1802), which restored something approaching harmony between France and England in the days "when George the Third was King," the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was little more than a truce. It was to the best interests of France that she should abstain from continental entanglements until her struggle with England overseas was finished. Temptation came from the old quarter from whence had sprung the celebrated Pragmatic Sanction, which had already cost so much in blood and treasure. In energy, Maria Theresa was a Frederick the Great in petticoats, and as sincere a hater. The possible reconquest of Silesia occupied her thoughts morning, noon, and night, not to the exclusion of other matters, but as the darling object of her life. The main difficulty was that Prussia was no longer a collection of minor states, but a highly-organised structure of consolidated interests. The stalwart Queen could not hope to catch her arch-enemy off his guard. His army was always ready. England listened to her schemes, but preferred not to entertain them. By an

elaborate process of reasoning it was then decided that France would make an excellent ally. She was near at hand, and, what was of greater importance, watching Frederick's growing strength with increasing impatience and hatred. The old enemy might become the new friend, seeing that at least they had a common jealousy. Kaunitz, the Austrian minister, having received a rebuff from England, went skilfully to work to make a good impression on the voluptuous beauty who ruled both Louis and France. He was all graciousness and courtesy, treated her with the deference paid to a Queen by right, flattered her vanity. She lent him her valuable aid, but as the King entertained some wonderful notion that he was his own Foreign Minister, that he had a genius for diplomacy, Maria Theresa's envoy was not at first successful. Still, beneath the mannerisms of a Beau Brummel there was a good deal of calm resolution. Kaunitz knew that "No" sometimes preludes "Yes," and kept himself in the background to await another and more favourable opportunity. It came in 1756, when Frederick of Prussia entered into an alliance with Great Britain, which had already begun to wage war on French commerce, although without having officially declared hostilities. Austria's cause was won, and an enmity which had lasted for two centuries was terminated by a diplomatic revolution. Russia, Saxony, and Sweden joined in their desire to humiliate upstart Prussia, forgetting or overlooking that they were once upstarts themselves. It is an interesting group of personalities around whom the story centres. On the one hand, two ambitious women, Maria Theresa and Madame de Pompadour; on the other two determined men, Frederick the Great and William Pitt the elder.

To follow the details of the long-drawn-out agony known as the Seven Years' War is not germane to our

subject, but the result is intensely important, for it undoubtedly gave a fillip to the revolutionary ideas now beginning to permeate France.

The struggle began in 1756 by Frederick boldly invading Saxony without any previous declaration of war, and if at first success seemed to attend his arms, it was not long before he found his Rhenish provinces overridden by a French army and Prussia herself entered by Russian troops. The battle of Rossbach (1757) marked Frederick's first important success, but his long campaign against the French, Austrian, Imperial, and Russian forces in Saxony, Silesia, Brandenburg, and Bohemia, was both hazardous and difficult, especially when England's solid financial support of £670,000 per annum was withdrawn in 1762 owing to Pitt's resignation and the pacific policy of George III. Death proved a very good friend indeed to Frederick when, in the following year, Elizabeth of Russia surrendered to the Universal Foe. This relieved the tense strain somewhat, because Czar Peter III, an admirer of Frederick's skill and methods, concluded peace with him, and left him one army less to fight. A little later the Russians were placed at his disposal, to be withdrawn before long by the murder of Peter and the succession of Catherine, who preferred to be neutral. With wonderful energy the King of Prussia cleared Silesia of the Austrians, and came to terms with Maria Theresa at Hubertsburg on the 15th February 1763. Once again Frederick was reassured on the question of Silesia, and he avowed that he would aid Maria Theresa's son to succeed his father as Emperor should such assistance be necessary. In the same month and year the long struggle for colonies and sea power waged by France and England also ended. Under such sterling fighters as Boscawen and Hawke the maritime plans of Choiseul were

shattered, and as the command of the sea is all-important in matters relating to colonial possessions, the French settlers in Canada were at a disadvantage in their resistance. What the British admirals did at sea, the intrepid Wolfe and Amherst accomplished on land. Montcalm supported the cause of Louis XV with magnificent daring, and perished together with his worthy foe in the battle which preceded the fall of Quebec (1759) and the surrender of Montreal a year later. What Montcalm had endeavoured to do in Canada the brave but misguided and ill-used Lally was undertaking in India, with results no more favourable. He besieged Madras with determination up to the moment of its relief by Admiral Pocock, and held out in Pondicherry under the most trying conditions until famine had so decimated his ranks that he was forced to surrender to Sir Eyre Coote in January 1761. The lesser colonies fell to the all-powerful English navy, as did those of Spain. The latter was now an ally of France by reason of the Family Compact, which guaranteed their respective possessions. Against her Great Britain declared war in January 1762.

By the Treaty of Paris, signed on the 10th February 1763, France had some of her possessions in the West Indies restored to her, as well as Belle Isle, off the coast of Brittany, which had been captured in 1761, but Canada and the territory east of the Mississippi were surrendered to England, and five trading posts were all that remained to her in India. In addition, Minorca was given up, and it was agreed that the fortifications of Dunkirk were to be demolished. France ceded Louisiana to Spain as compensation for Minorca, which island she had agreed to hand over to Spain when the alliance was formed; the latter ceded Florida to England. Five days later the

Treaty of Hubertsburg gave peace to Austria, Prussia, and Saxony.

The general balance of power in Europe remained unchanged, but France had been bereft of her colonial children and much of her prestige, and Great Britain had gained America and India and established her supremacy on the seas.

CHAPTER VI

THE SEEDS OF REVOLT

"The French nation reasons freely, which they never did before, upon matters of religion and government, and begin to be spregiudicati, *to have got rid of their prejudices; the officers do so too; in short, all the symptoms which I have ever met with in history, previous to great changes and revolutions in government, now exist and daily increase in France."*

LORD CHESTERFIELD (1753).

WE have seen France at the zenith of her power under Louis XIV, glanced at his austere court, noticed both the success and failure of his idea of centralisation, reviewed the reforms of Colbert in commerce, and the reorganisation of the army by Louvois. Then the curtain fell, and a new act began. The helpless child King was not the principal character, but the Duke of Orleans, at once the hero and villain of the piece. Versailles became the haunt of vice; the halls which had resounded to the minor key of theological discourses echoed the laughter of coarse jests. A little humorous relief, not unmixed with tragedy, manifested itself in the financial schemes of Law. From thenceforth the stern figure of War dominated the piece. We have had no pastoral interlude. None exists.

So far nothing has been said of the "crowd" since the administration of Fleury. In the seventeenth century and the first half of its successor the people of the various States of Europe existed for the King, and not the King for the people. There were what are termed "enlightened despots"—the very name is a contradiction—such as Frederick II, Catherine of Russia, and the Emperor Joseph II. Few reforms are directly traceable to mon-

archs. Public opinion, or if you prefer it, the united mind of the nation, sometimes led by the still, small voice of a thinker or of a school of thinkers, is usually the source of inspiration in this direction. The statute rolls of England, the archives of continental Powers, the pages of contemporary records prove this patent fact. Nature works from below upward in the giant volcano and the tiny seed. King John neither suggested *Magna Carta* nor Pope Leo X the Reformation. If we argue that there are few monarchs and only one Pope at a time, that they are in the hopeless minority, there is the obvious retort that unless the head of a temporal State or of a spiritual organisation can be looked up to for guidance, he is worse than useless. So the French discovered. Things are changed in our own day. The position of a King in most countries is now merely nominal. The true monarch of the realm is the nation.

It was in 1733 that Fleury, doubtless imagining that he was reinstating a measure which would eventually encourage the declining commerce of his country, resorted to the old-time *corvée*. This was a tax paid in labour, the possible inheritance of the Romans, and was not entirely confined to France. Good roads doubtless facilitate trade, but when the peasants had to place themselves, their carts and animals at the service of the State for nothing a week, it may be doubted whether the remedy was not considerably worse than the disease. There was no escaping the *corvée;* the intendants saw to that, and rigidly enforced obedience. While the peasant was doing the work of a navvy, he could not attend to his own business, with the result that acres of cultivated land went to ruin, and thousands starved. Free labour is neither a sound commercial proposition for the State nor its members. As the so-called lower classes

THE PEASANT UNDER TAILLE, TAX, AND CORVÉE

An engraving of 1789 recalling the burdens placed upon the peasantry under Louis XV's administration in 1765. The corvée—forced unpaid labour—was the most hated of all. Reproduced from the Hennin Collection by special permission of the French Government.

are invariably, perhaps inevitably, more numerous than the upper and middle strata of society, the condition of France went from bad to worse. Indeed, only half a dozen years after Fleury's panacea had been established, the Marquis d'Argenson, who makes more than one reference to the iniquities of the *corvée*, tells us that although he writes "in time of peace, with all appearance of an average if not an abundant crop, men are dying all round us, as thick as flies; they are wretched, eating grass. The western provinces, the old Huguenot districts, are suffering most: society is so poor that it has no means wherewith to buy anything: food grows dearer, yet no one cultivates: the taxes are exacted rigorously, their amount increased. Look at Normandy, that fine country; —the farmers are ruined, they cease to exist; some squires even set their valets to till their farms. The Duke of Orleans one day threw a scrap of bread made of bracken on the King's table in the council room, saying, 'See, Sire, this is your subjects' food.'" Famine helped to decimate the country in the years 1739–40. The Paris *Parlement*, supported by most of the provincial *Parlements*, was almost invariably in opposition to Government, but that mattered little. No edict whatever was issued in the matter of the hated *corvée*. The King and his Minister did very much as they pleased. After Fleury's death Madame de Pompadour practically helped herself from the Treasury when in need of money, which was frequently. The King signed bills, the Controller-General paid without question.

It required a man of considerable force of character to tackle the apparently insurmountable problem of finance. One came forward at last in the person of Machault, who proved himself the most able of Louis's fourteen Ministers of Finance. He saw no logical reason

why the clergy and other privileged persons should not bear a fair share of the burden by paying a property tax, to be called the *vingtième*. Other statesmen had attempted much the same and failed, but Machault was not to be deterred by precedent, and he imposed the measure. Mother Church, backed by the *Parlement*, determined to waive nothing of her temporal power, and exerted the full force of her authority in opposition. No sooner was this matter settled by compromise and a generous "free gift" on the part of the clergy, than the Church made herself objectionable by persecuting the Protestants and the Jansenists. To the latter she refused the sacraments, the rites of burial—all that men held sacred and indispensable to salvation. In this the support of the *Parlement* was not given, although the King uttered threats and told its members to desist. They refused, resigned, and were exiled. Louis thought better of his action fifteen months later, and reinstated those who had defied him. Public opinion was with them. There had been riots not long before, ominous and unpleasant, and the monarch preferred that others should encounter the impending deluge. The clergy won; Machault lost. He had done much to repair the broken condition of the navy, but that was not counted unto him for righteousness any more than the continuation of the war-tax known as the *dixième*. The burgher class in the towns and cities alone flourished. It was of them that Voltaire was thinking when he wrote, "Europe has hardly ever had a more prosperous period than the interval between the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle and 1755. Commerce flourished from St. Petersburg to Cadiz; the fine arts were everywhere in honour; the nations corresponded freely with one another. Europe seemed a large family which had quarrelled, but was reunited." Precisely the same kind of thing

is happening in the United Kingdom to-day. Textile and manufacturing trades go ahead; agriculture marches backwards, due partly, no doubt, to the farmers' habitual intolerance of co-operation, but also to heavy traffic rates and the glamour of the towns, which denudes the country of pastoral population. The cases are not exactly parallel; very few are, but comparison is both interesting and instructive. If history is worth anything, if it aims to be other than a mere record of the acts of prominent men and women long since dead, it is surely in the direction of affording object lessons for our edification and profit. It may be stated as a general axiom that no two events are exactly similar, but this should not preclude us from profiting by the errors of the past.

So far as the aristocracy is concerned, we arrange things better than the French *noblesse* of the eighteenth century. It was Louis XIV, you will remember, who introduced that abomination of abominations, the absentee landlord, in France. Once the fashion was established, it became the rule. Paris was henceforth the centre of the kingdom, the Mecca of the elect. It was more than the "correct thing" for nobles to put in an appearance at Versailles; it was practically enforced by the intendants acting on the King's instructions. One can readily appreciate all that this meant. Châteaux fell into decay, estates grew weeds instead of wheat, many of those who endeavoured to keep up two establishments found themselves hopelessly involved in debt or compelled to borrow money at usurious rates. Their condition reacted on the peasantry. Not that there was no silver lining to the cloud which brooded so ominously from the Ile de France to Provence. The peasant was enabled to buy a plot of land, and if he had little or no capital to put into the venture, the field on which he worked was at least his own.

The taxes, yearly increasing, were his bugbear, and it appeared that nothing he could do would shake it off. Outlaws were ever on the increase; highway robbery became all too prevalent. In 1758, three years after the boom mentioned by Voltaire,[1] the expenditure of *la belle France* was 218,000,000 *livres* above her income. We find Controller-General Boulogne establishing State lotteries, his successor Silhouette struggling hard to make the privileged classes share the burden of taxation, and failing as his predecessors had done. In 1759 Government relieved itself by the simple expedient of refusing to pay certain of its debts, the court of last resort where refuge had been taken before. Is the condition of France to be wondered at when it has been computed that Madame de Pompadour cost the country some 36,000,000 *livres*—a mere bagatelle compared to Du Barry, who squandered five times that amount? Perhaps it was just as well for Louis XV that all the officers in the army were of noble rank, that no private soldier at six *sous* a day—frequently unpaid—had the shadow of a chance to command a regiment.

It only remains to be said that of Louis's numerous later ministers the only one who is conspicuous is Choiseul, who attacked the Jesuits to such good purpose that the *Parlement* of Paris decreed their suppression in France and the confiscation of their property on the 6th August 1762. Apart from this desirable transaction and the improvement he brought about in the organisation of the army and navy, his interests were lavished mainly on affairs outside of the kingdom. He did not shine conspicuously in the matter of Poland, to whom he sent money but no troops, preferring to use his influence to persuade Sweden and Turkey to take up the cause of Stanislaus Poniatowski. He was certainly deceived in

[1] See *ante*, p. 80.

thinking that although the vultures were gathered together there would be no corpse to dismember. The first partition of the unluckiest kingdom of Europe took place in 1772, the sharers being Prussia, Russia, and Austria. The annexation of Corsica four years before, while it cost much blood and treasure, was a much more important project. Genoa ceded the island for 2,000,000 *francs*.

"I like the Genoese selling Corsica!" Walpole writes ironically to Sir Horace Mann. "I think we should follow their example and sell France; we have about as good a title, and very near as much possession. At how much may they value Corsica? At the rate of islands, it can't go for much. Charles the Second sold Great Britain and Ireland to Louis XIV for £300,000 a year, and that was reckoned extravagantly dear."

At Ajaccio on the 15th May 1769, Napoleon Bonaparte, the inheritor of the French Revolution, was born. Into his hands the French people later confided their "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity!" in return for Glory, Despotism, and Failure. Two months after the cradle received the founder of the First Empire—that is to say, in July 1769—the marriage of the Dauphin and Marie Antoinette was arranged, their respective ages being fifteen and fourteen years. It was part of the clever scheme of Maria Theresa, aided by Kaunitz and Choiseul, to cement the treaty of alliance made between France and Austria on the 1st May 1756.[1]

Choiseul fell from power at the close of 1770. True to his determination to rid France of the dominating influence of the Jesuitical party, he became a victim of their intrigue. A relentless foe of tyranny, the friend of the philosophers and the *parlements*, he marked down for exposure the Duc d'Aiguillon, and was himself struck by

[1] See *ante*, p. 73.

the recoil. As governor of the province of Brittany, this worthy had been an unjust steward. He was now Minister of War and the stalwart supporter of privilege. Once more the autocratic methods of Louis XV became evident. He forbade the matter being investigated by the *Parlement* of Rennes, which had issued a process against the nobleman, on the pretext that the Duke was a peer of France, and transferred the hearing to Paris. In reality this was an unfortunate move, for that *Parlement* was in no happy mood. Things boded so ill for Aiguillon that the King stopped the trial. The magistrates retaliated by suspending the Duke's rights as a peer. There was the usual recourse to a bed of justice, the consequent annulling of the decree, and a rebuke administered by Louis to the "Long Robes who wanted to be his guardians." They were informed that "the King holds his crown from God alone, that the right of making the laws by which his subjects are to be guided belongs to him only, without interference or participation.". "They are a posse of republicans," Louis remarked on another occasion. "However, enough of that; things as they are will last my time." Could callousness go further?

Choiseul's enforced retirement from active politics speedily followed. The "Long Robes" suspended their duties; the provincial *parlements* resounded with cries for a meeting of the States-General. "Never before, perhaps, had the nation a greater interest in obtaining their convocation, or the *parlements* in demanding it"—thus the Court of Normandy, which is typical of many similar assertions.

Choiseul's disgrace was not entirely due to the Aiguillon affair. He had fallen foul of Madame du Barry, the King's latest favourite, and she had retaliated. The monarch, whom the Minister characterises in his *Mémoires*

as weak of spirit and shy of manner, "which arises in great part from his stupidity," did his best to patch up the quarrel, but to no good end. The instrument Du Barry used was the Chancellor Maupeou, formerly Premier President of the Paris *Parlement*, whose high position was due to Choiseul's friendship. The Chancellor in his turn was aided and abetted by the crafty Abbé Terray, Controller-General of the Finances. He lied with such semblance of conviction as to Choiseul's measures, that fiction was swallowed as fact by a King either too lazy or unwilling to investigate matters himself. On the 24th December 1770, a *lettre de cachet* was issued, and the worthy statesman banished from the capital. Perhaps the splendid ovation he received at the hands of the populace of Paris as he departed from his hôtel in the Rue de Richelieu for Chanteloup compensated him somewhat for his fall from royal favour. This display of feeling and respect was a straw which showed which way the wind was blowing.

Aiguillon now came into his own by being appointed Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the succeeding Maupeou ministry. Their first act was one of vengeance against the reactionary *Parlement*. When most of its members had retired for the night, they were awakened by gendarmes with the request that they would signify whether they intended to resume their duties or not. With praiseworthy courage, by far the majority of them refused; those who were chicken-hearted and gave a tardy consent retracted the following day. Nearly two hundred *lettres de cachet* were issued without further ado, and the magistrates were banished. So much for attempts to resist the monarchy. Worse was to follow. The *parlements* themselves were suppressed. Louis announced that the post of magistrate would no longer be heredi-

tary, and that justice would be administered free by six new legal bodies—crowded with Crown nominees, be it added—which were to sit at Paris, Arras, Blois, Châlons-sur-Marne, Clermont, Lyon, and Poitiers. These were in addition to the central court at the capital.

The *Pacte de Famine*, in which the King was interested, made a corner in wheat and sent up the price, presumably to show their patriotism. But all things come to an end, including the tyranny of kings, and it was an unhallowed grave which, in the May of 1774, received the mass of corruption known in life as his most Sacred Majesty King Louis the Fifteenth. The Vicomte de Ségur relates his surprise at the lack of sorrow on the part of the Court at Versailles: "I everywhere found that indifference prevailed, or even a degree of gladness—in the palace, in the town, in the gardens. The sinking sun was forgotten, every worshipper turned towards the rising sun. No one thought of anything but the future; old courtiers were only anxious to preserve their credit under the new reign, and young ones to supplant the old."

"Here comes the ladies' charmer!" jeered the mob as the coffin passed.

CHAPTER VII

VOLTAIRE'S CRUSADE AGAINST THE "INFAMOUS"

"Atheism and Fanaticism are the two poles of a Universe of Confusion and Horror. The narrow zeal of Virtue is between those two. March with a firm step in that path, believe in God and do good." VOLTAIRE.

THE creations of man are the tangible assets of his mind. In no sphere of activity is this more evident than in literary work, where manual labour is reduced to a minimum. Financial muddles, the distress of the peasantry, the profligacy of King and Court, the sceptical indifference to religion, the resistance of the *Parlements*, all played their parts in the making of the French Revolution, but no other great social upheaval has demonstrated so completely the truth of the old adage, "The pen is mightier than the sword." The mystical and unorthodox Rousseau, who earned his bread by copying music at ten sous a folio; Voltaire, who waged "war against the Infamous," and incidentally made successful speculations in the fashionable army contracting business; the harum-scarum and fatalistic Diderot, whose versatility enabled him to draw up an advertisement for a barber, teach a German princess metaphysics, and plan the monumental *Encyclopædia*;[1] D'Alembert, thinker, geometrician, and lover of the fickle, pock-marked Mlle. de Lespinasse, such are the outstanding literary immortals of the great mind-movement which heralded the theoretical Ideal State that proved so colossal a failure when it became fact. They did not bring about the French Revolution, as has been

[1] Published in thirty-five volumes (1751–65).

asserted. They hastened the inevitable and helped to plan the campaign, embodying in their writings what many men felt who were incapable of clothing their thought in words, thereby liberating scientific and philosophic thought from the deep and gloomy recesses of a mental fortress to which it had been confined. They held a torch that others might see the path they themselves were never to traverse. Montaigne, Descartes, and Bayle had already begun to undermine the citadel; it remained for the philosophers mentioned to complete the investment and ensure the surrender.

Although Jean Jacques Rousseau is rightly regarded as the writer of the text-books of the Jacobins, it was François Marie Arouet (1694–1778), known to fame as Voltaire, who blazed a trail by means of the cutting satire and ruthless disregard of established spiritual authority so evident in many of his poems, dramas, novels, and historical studies. Like the celebrated military free-lances of France of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, he spared none. If on occasion he stooped to conquer at the feet of Louis XV with an *Ode to the King*, brought to the remembrance of Madame de Pompadour his former friendship with her in order to receive Court favours, and partook of the Eucharist in his chapel at Ferney, it must be conceded that the Abbé Desfontaines "and other rascals" had driven him half-mad by stigmatising his *Mahomet* as impious. He probably imagined a relaxation of persecution would follow his conformation. The only monarch at all to Voltaire's liking other than *le Grand Monarque* was Frederick the Great, with whom he afterwards quarrelled, bequeathing to posterity much food for reflection as to the idiosyncrasies of two of the most eminent men of the eighteenth century. The first occasion on which he

François Marie Arouet de Voltaire (1694–1778) at the age of 24

(*From the painting by Largillière in the Musée Carnavalet*)

saw the Prussian monarch was at Wesel, in 1740. The preliminary impression can have been scarcely worthy of the subject, for Frederick was suffering from an attack of ague. "I saw," Voltaire relates, "in a small room, by the light of a candle, a little mattress, two feet and a half wide, on which lay a little man wrapped up in a dressing-gown of coarse blue stuff; this was the king, who perspired and shivered under a wretched counterpane, in a violent access of fever." An appropriate parallel of this scene is furnished by Baron de Frénilly, who as a child made his way to the philosopher's apartments. "I found myself," he says, "face to face with a tall skeleton buried in a large armchair, and wearing on his head a huge bear-skin cap which covered him down to his eyes. It was Voltaire." As it happened, both pictures improved on closer acquaintance. Frederick speedily recovered, and such diversified topics as the immortality of the soul, liberty, and the Androgynes of Plato helped to enliven the supper-table, and Frénilly was rewarded with frequent repetitions of "Oh! what a pretty child!" and a huge Savoy biscuit. "I soon felt attracted to him," Voltaire writes of Frederick; "the more that he was a king—always a very attractive circumstance to human weakness. In general, it is we literary people who flatter kings; but this one applauded me from top to toe, whilst the Abbé Desfontaines and other rascals libelled me in Paris at least once a week." Subsequent events scattered his flattery to the four winds.

Many people are deeply prejudiced in the matter of Voltaire. They hold an apparently ineradicable idea that he was a confirmed atheist who would have gone so far as to dethrone God Himself, had he been given the opportunity. This is entirely incorrect. He certainly did not agree with Leibnitz, that "All is for the best in the best of

all possible worlds"—indeed Voltaire wrote his celebrated *Candide* to refute so unchristian-like a maxim, which still continues to hold sway in many unthinking minds. The proof of this as furnished by Pangloss, one of the characters, is "excellent, but we must cultivate our garden." Voltaire ridiculed orthodox beliefs because his own observation led him to assume that the majority of those who taught them were altogether unworthy of their sacred office, that those who listened did so because it was the correct thing to do, that the Church when in operation was often an instrument of vengeance rather than of forgiveness, and from certain events and tenets in the Scriptures which seemed to him either contradictory, unjust, or borrowed from other religions. That Voltaire sometimes went too far in his "war against the Infamous" is not questioned, and he might have charged his bombs with less explosive powder. But when we take into consideration the times in which he lived—different as they were to the real or assumed tolerance of the twentieth century—and remember that heretics were still burned, that the body of an actress was denied the rites of Christian burial, that a Protestant was broken on the wheel so late as 1762, that a few years later a youth who merely showed irreverence was tortured and afterwards executed, that Voltaire himself had incurred the displeasure of Holy Church when a young man and been sent to the dreaded Bastille, the case against the author of the *Poem on the Disaster of Lisbon* appears less black. At the worst, the verdict must be "Not proven." "If Voltaire," asserts one of his biographers,[1] "was often a mocker in form, he was always serious in meaning and laborious in matter. If he was unflinching against theology, he always paid religion respect enough to treat it as the most important of all

[1] *Voltaire*, by John Morley (London, 1891), p. 9.

subjects." What portion of the moral code that remained was to all intents and purposes bereft of its meaning by the profligacy of the upper classes, including the prelacy. One has merely to read half a dozen of the many French memoirs penned at the time to prove this statement. Marriage was regarded in practice neither as a bond nor a sacrament; if there were children they were relegated to the care of others until Rousseau's *Émilius* became the rage and indicated a more natural, if more obvious, way of dealing with offspring. The bishops thought more of currying favour at Versailles than of administering their dioceses; to be a temporal statesman was deemed more worthy than to occupy so mundane an office as spiritual shepherd. What sincerity existed was to be found in villages far removed from profligate Paris, where patient curés still administered the comforts of religion and taught what they thought was good for their flocks and the welfare of the Roman Catholic communion. The general attitude towards religion was that of Henry IV: "Paris is worth a Mass!"

In the words of Gaston Maugras, "*L'Esprit*—a ready wit—was the divinity of the day." Voltaire possessed it to the full, and used it in and out of season, in subjects sacred and profane. It was not in him to fight with fisticuffs; nature provided him with a rapier, and he was not sparing in his usage of it. His favourite opponent was the Church, whose spiritual tyranny he shattered. When he was not fighting he was clutching a sieve and sifting what he held to be superstitions from what others held to be creeds. In doing so he helped to liberate the human mind from both. Voltaire hated dogma and was man enough to say so. He was an inverted Luther.

Let us look into this question of his alleged atheism a little closer by referring to Voltaire's *Philosophical Dic-*

tionary, for it contains a lengthy article on the term so basely associated with his name. After lashing professional "confidants of the Divinity" because they "agree so little among themselves" and represent Him in many different ways, he adds, "It must be confessed that it seemed permissible to a reasonable man to doubt the reality of a Being so strangely announced, and to a sympathetic man to imagine that a God who had voluntarily created so many unfortunates could have no existence. A philosopher has been given to the world, who has discovered by what simple and sublime laws all the celestial bodies move in the abyss of space.[1] Thus the work of the universe, better known, shows a workman; and so many laws, always constant, prove a legislator. Sound philosophy has thus destroyed that atheism to which an obscure theology lent weapons. . . . The philosopher who recognises a God has with him a crowd of probabilities equivalent to certainty, while the atheist has nothing but doubts. . . . Atheism and fanaticism are two monsters, which rend and devour society; but the atheist, in his error, preserves the reason which cuts his claws, while those of the fanatic are sharpened in the incessant madness which afflicts him."

Those of Voltaire's works which are particularly vehement against the then accepted dogmas of Christianity are *The For and Against, or Epistle to Uranie* (1722); and *The Voice of the Sage and of the People* (1750).

Unlike Rousseau, Voltaire had no political propaganda, and tilted at no party save that of the Church, which happened to have "a finger in every pie," and consequently was of paramount importance, for it dominated every nook and cranny of the kingdom. Now and again, however, he made covert remarks which could not

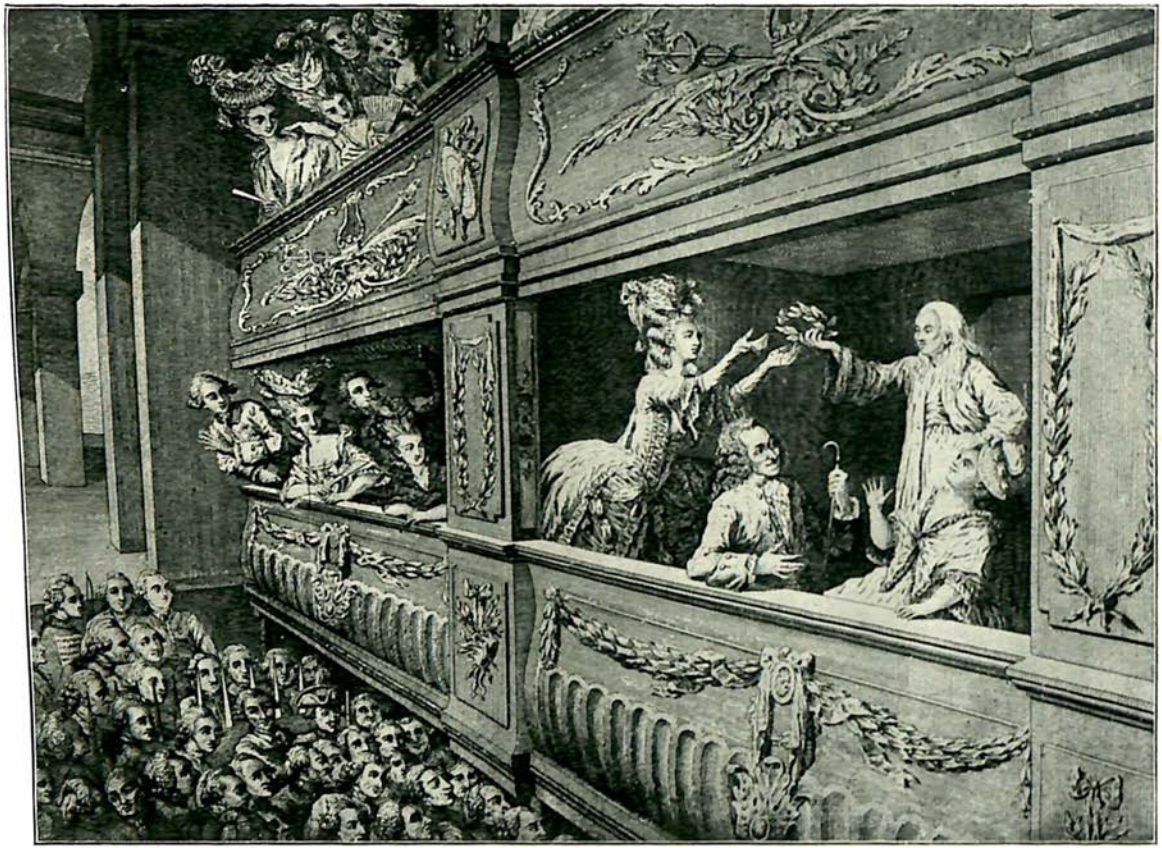
[1] Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727).

fail to be appreciated by those who had eyes to see and his *Philosophical Dictionary* to read. For instance, in the article on War he declaims against the clergy—"miserable physicians of souls"—for their connivance at, and interest in, the wholesale slaughter which had deluged the centuries, and inveighs in powerful invective and pungent metaphor worthy of the most vivid orator of the peace party of our own time against a resort to the sword. "Philosophers and moralists," he cries, "burn your books: so long as the caprice of a handful of men will cause the massacring in all loyalty of thousands of our brothers, the part of the human race which is devoted to heroism will contain all that is most frightful in human nature. What concern to me are humanity, benevolence, modesty, temperance, gentleness, wisdom, piety, so long as half an ounce of lead shatters my body, and I die at twenty in torments unspeakable, surrounded by five or six thousand dead or dying, while my eyes, opening for the last time, see the town I was born in delivered to fire and sword, and the last sounds that reach my ears are the shrieks of women and children expiring in the ruins—and the whole for the pretended interests of a man that we do not know?"

When we reflect that it was usually the representatives of dynasties who provoked war by indulging in family quarrels, that territorial acquisitions were often made from motives of personal aggrandizement, that it was monarch versus monarch rather than nation versus nation as such, the point becomes abundantly clear. What code of morality was it that justified the abominable haggling over the Pragmatic Sanction both before and after the corpse of the Emperor Charles VI was cold? The making of history, it would seem, has very little to do with right and wrong. It is easy to argue

that if Frederick the Great had not seized Silesia some other political highwayman would have done so, but this does not justify the action according to the lights of posterity, even if his sharp practice laid the foundations of a mighty nationality. The statecraft of the eighteenth century can be justified only on the assumption that "might is right," a doctrine failing in appeal to the people who constitute a nation and have to fight its battles. Voltaire preferred to represent their point of view.

That the Philosopher of Ferney was sincere in his protestations against the stifling of independent thought is beyond question, otherwise he surely would not have allowed himself to be bandied from pillar to post in order to keep from the clutches of would-be persecutors. His works are not the products of a diseased imagination, and if they are occasionally splenetic, their writer was usually kindness personified. He recognised good where he found it; witness his reference to the Quakers in his *Philosophic Letters on the English*, published after a visit to these shores in 1726–9. His keen intelligence speedily summed up the situation here, to the disadvantage of his own country. "Although the Episcopal and Presbyterian sects are the two prevailing ones in Great Britain," he writes, "all others are welcome, and all live fairly well together; although most of the preachers detest each other with all the heartiness of a Jansenist damning a Jesuit. Were there but one religion in England, there would be a danger of despotism; were there but two, they would cut each other's throats. But there are thirty, and accordingly they dwell together in peace." In France there was not the safety in sectarian numbers, but one all-embracing despotism, the medieval Roman Catholic Church. There is a fitting corollary to the above passage in Voltaire's voluminous correspondence,



VOLTAIRE, "THE MAN UNIQUE IN ALL AGES," IS CROWNED BY THE MARQUISE DE VILETTE IN THE THEATRE

(From an engraving of 1778 in the Hennin Collection. Given by special permission of the French Government)

thirty-four years after the *Letters* had been publicly burnt at the behest of the *Parlement* of Paris. "Now," he asserts, "a revolution has been accomplished in the human mind that nothing again can ever arrest. They would have prevented this revolution, if they had been sage and moderate. The quarrels of Jansenists and Molinists have done more harm to the Christian religion than could have been done by four emperors like Julian one after another."

Voltaire made a god of Reason. If not a deep thinker in metaphysical subjects like Locke, whose disciple he was, he wrote with a pungency and appeal that ensured popularity and did not necessitate a preliminary academic career, hence his influence. Thanks to him, as well as to Montesquieu and the Encyclopedists, philosophy was not only discussed in the *salons*, but became a popular study, and when philosophy enters the door, make-believe religion is apt to fly out of the window. Has not the immortal Gibbon confessed that his first essay in literature "was perhaps suggested by Voltaire's *Age of Louis XIV*"? Its author he called "the most extraordinary man of the age." Would that the historian of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* had left to us that proposed "dialogue of the dead, in which Lucian, Erasmus, and Voltaire should mutually acknowledge the danger of exposing an old superstition to the contempt of the blind and fanatic multitude."[1]

When he was over eighty years of age, and illness laid him low, Voltaire wrote, "I die adoring God, loving my friends, not hating my enemies, and detesting superstition." Which reminds one of the saying of Galiani, a worker in the same Cause of spiritual liberation, "As the soul grows old, belief reappears."

[1] Gibbon was not, of course, a "believer," hence the use of the term "superstition."

CHAPTER VIII

THE FOE OF KINGS

"Everyone has his own calling upon the earth; mine is to tell the public harsh but useful truths. I have preached humanity, gentleness, tolerance, so far as it depends upon me; 'tis no fault of mine if the world has not listened. I have made it a rule to keep to general truths; I produce no libels, no satires; I attack no man, but men; not an action, but a vice."

ROUSSEAU.

SOCIAL reconstruction has ever been a favourite theme with knights of the pen. Plato, Sir Thomas More, Campanella, and Morelly—the last-mentioned the immediate precursor of Rousseau—had all contributed their quota to a subject which has no finality. Some people despise and ignore everything which does not come under the heading of fact. "The evidence of things not seen" is to them incognisable. Neither ideals nor ideas are of service to such folk. Everything must be as plain and straightforward as $2+2=4$. Carlyle, the epic-historian of the French Revolution, once overheard a conversation anent the ineffectiveness of such figments of the imagination, and he took occasion to interpolate four pregnant sentences which it would do well for over-practical folk to commit to memory. "Gentlemen," he said, "there was once a man called Rousseau. He wrote a book which was nothing but ideas. People laughed at it. But the skins of those who laughed went to bind the second edition of the book." The eighteenth-century writings of Rousseau are not yet relegated to the limbo of the done-with.

Consistency is the genius of mediocrity. You will

not find it in the pages of the *Social Contract* or the *New Héloïse*, and it is not evident in Rousseau's life. Superactive mentality would seem to prevent anything approaching the stereotyped. Ideas flow rapidly, overlap, contradict, seldom agree in the writings of the Genevese prophet, who could not rest in one place for any length of time, and made mortal enemies of his best friends. Like an amateur detective, he suspected everybody. When Burke, the arch-enemy of the Revolution, made Rousseau's acquaintance, he averred that the philosopher "entertained no principle either to influence his heart, or guide his understanding, but vanity." He was certainly hyper-sensitive as a child and hypercritical as a man, but "vanity" seems scarcely the correct word. He was morbidly introspective, and at the time of Burke's acquaintance with him a most convinced misanthrope, a "voice crying in the wilderness," a disheartened man in ill-health who had been flattered by princes, visited by celebrities, and applauded by Paris, but who could not forget that he had also been stigmatised as anti-Christ, become within an ace the victim of murderous hands, and a fugitive from the law. He had sounded the depths of grief and scaled the heights of joy. Experiences such as these seldom engender happiness or a placid spirit. Rousseau, in a word, is a bundle of inconsistencies which defies the psychologist. The contemplative life which he led he abjured in others. "It is only an indolence of soul," he writes. "Man is not made to meditate, but to act." One has merely to read a few pages of his *Confessions* to prove his lack of uniformity. That book alone is sufficient to stamp him as no ordinary mortal.

There are many contemporary pen-portraits of Rousseau, some etched in vitriol, others highly coloured,

a few perhaps just. It is difficult to paint so mercurial a subject, up in the seventh heaven one day, down in the nethermost hell twenty-four hours later. Those who admire him perhaps prefer to visualise their hero in the description of Bernardin de St. Pierre, the creator of *Paul and Virginia*. This is how Rousseau appeared to his pupil in the sunny days of June 1772, when Jean Jacques was living in the Rue Plâtrière, Paris:

"We mounted to the fourth storey. We knocked, and Madame Rousseau opened the door. 'Come in, gentlemen,' she said; 'you will find my husband.' We passed through a very small antechamber, where the household utensils were neatly arranged, and from that into a room where Jean Jacques was seated in an overcoat and a white cap, busy copying music. He rose with a smiling face, offered us chairs, and resumed his work, at the same time taking a part in conversation. He was thin and of middle height. One shoulder struck me as rather higher than the other . . . otherwise he was very well proportioned. He had a brown complexion, some colour on his cheek-bones, a good mouth, a well-made nose, and rounded and lofty brow, and eyes full of fire. The oblique lines falling from the nostrils to the extremity of the lips, and marking a physiognomy, in his case expressed great sensibility and something even painful. One observed in his face three or four of the characteristics of melancholy—the deep receding eyes and the elevation of the eyebrows; you saw profound sadness in the wrinkles of the brow; a keen and even caustic gaiety in a thousand little crosses at the corners of the eyes, of which the orbits entirely disappeared when he laughed. . . . Near him was a spinet on which from time to time he tried an air. Two little beds of blue and white striped calico, a table, and a few chairs, made the stock

of his furniture. On the walls hung a plan of the forest and park of Montmorency, where he had once lived, and an engraving of the King of England, his old benefactor. His wife was sitting mending linen; a canary sang in a cage hung from the ceiling; sparrows came for crumbs on to the sills of the windows, which on the side of the street were open; while in the window of the antechamber we noticed boxes and pots filled with such plants as it pleases nature to sow. There was in the whole effect of his little establishment an air of cleanness, peace, and simplicity, which was delightful."

Altogether it is a pleasing picture. If it was "vanity" which caused Rousseau to live in such a humble fashion, it must have been strangely perverted. Perhaps it was the age-worn problem of making ends meet which precluded a more gorgeous setting, added to a desire to live the simple life now deemed so fashionable by those who have sufficient money to disregard or defy the conventional. Certainly the philosopher's private ledger, assuming that he kept one, would not have proved him a wealthy man. The King gave him £216 for producing *Le Devin du Village* before the Court at Fontainebleau; a performance at Bellevue brought him £108 from Madame de Pompadour, and a similar sum was obtained from the Opera. For the book rights of the same work—a quasi-musical comedy—he received £45; in all, £477, a sum which many of our composers would regard as a mere bagatelle. The *Dictionary of Music*, on which he worked for a considerable time, yielded its editor £418, 8*s*., part of the payment being in the form of an annuity. *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, an extremely successful work, realised a little short of £200; *Le Contrat Social*, £88 only.

The story of Rousseau, the literary master-mind of the Revolution, is tragedy from beginning to end. His

birth on the 28th June 1712 caused his mother's death; when he was eight years old his father, forced to go into exile over an affair of honour, left the child in charge of his uncle. In due course he began to study law, then forsook the scales of justice for the tools of the engraver. One night he found the gates of Geneva shut against him, and that incident, comparatively unimportant as it seemed, and in strict accord with precedent, determined his after life. A good-natured priest to whom he presented himself sent him to Mme. de Warens, at Annecy. She in turn passed him on to the Seminary of the Catechumens at Turin. There the Protestant was "converted," and later became a footman to the Comtesse de Vercellis. Many adventures followed, not always to his credit nor that of his patroness. He fell in love and out of it with amazing rapidity, took up music, went on tramp, invented a new system of musical notation, and at twenty-nine was at Paris endeavouring to find a market for his scheme. He was then fortunate enough to obtain the post of secretary to M. de Montaigu, the French Ambassador at Venice. His life during his stay in the "great town half floated by a deluge" was not so irreproachable as he makes it out to be in his autobiography. He could not get on with his superior, was found guilty of smuggling, and promptly left after eighteen months' service. Unable to obtain his salary—a not unusual happening—the iron entered into his soul. According to Rousseau's own showing, it was during his subsequent sojourn in Paris that he recognised that "germ of indignation against our stupid civil institutions, where the public weal and true justice are always sacrificed to I know not what apparent order, in truth fatal to all order, and which only add the sanction of public authority to the oppression of the weak and the

iniquity of the powerful." He planned a work to be entitled *Institutions Politiques*, which never saw the light of day, but bore fruit years after in his political speculations.

Rousseau's *Confessions* are inaccurate as regards dates, a circumstance accounted for by reason of their not having been penned until *circa* 1762–70, Lemaître giving the previous date as the beginning of the writings. It is quite probable that the embryo philosopher first contemplated the committal of his opinions to paper after his unfortunate experiences at Venice, but there is certainly a previous remark in his autobiography to his hatred of the then order of things. The entry has reference to his wanderings in the eastern part of France in 1732, and affords us a very good idea of the workings of the hated *taille*. The incident took place near Lyons, and is thus described by him:

"One day, among others, having purposely gone out of my way to take a nearer view of a spot that appeared delightful, I was so charmed with it, and wandered round it so often, that at length I completely lost myself, and after several hours' useless walking, weary, fainting with hunger and thirst, I entered a peasant's hut, which had not, indeed, a very promising appearance, but it was the only one I could discover near me. I thought it was here, as at Geneva, or in Switzerland, where the inhabitants, living at ease, have it in their power to exercise hospitality. I entreated the countryman to give me some dinner, offering to pay for it; whereupon he presented me with some skimmed milk and coarse barley bread, saying it was all he had. I drank the milk with pleasure, and ate the bread, chaff and all, but it was not very restorative to a man sinking with fatigue. The countryman, who watched me narrowly, judged the truth of my

story by my appetite, and presently (after having said that he plainly saw I was an honest, good-natured young man, and did not come to betray him) opened a little trap-door by the side of his kitchen, went down, and returned a moment after with a good brown loaf of pure wheat, the remains of a well-flavoured ham, and a bottle of wine, the sight of which rejoiced my heart more than all the rest. He then prepared a good thick omelet, and I made such a dinner as none but a walking traveller ever enjoyed.

"When I again offered to pay, his inquietude and fears returned. He not only would have no money, but refused it with the most evident emotion; and, what made this scene more amusing, I could not imagine the motive of his fear. At length he pronounced tremblingly those terrible words, 'Commissioners' and 'Cellar-rats,' explaining himself by giving me to understand that he concealed his wine because of the excise, and his bread on account of the tax imposed on it; adding, he should be nearly ruined if it was suspected he was not almost perishing with want. What he said to me on this subject (of which I had not the smallest idea) made an impression on my mind that can never be effaced, sowing seeds of that inextinguishable hatred that has since grown up in my heart against the vexations these unhappy people suffer, and against their oppressors. This man, though in easy circumstances, dared not eat the bread gained by the sweat of his brow, and could only escape destruction by exhibiting an outward appearance of misery! I left his cottage with as much indignation as concern, deploring the fate of those beautiful countries, where nature has been prodigal of her gifts, only that they may become the prey of barbarous exactors."

Rousseau's mental meals as a young man consisted

mainly of seventeenth-century literature, which had a marked influence on his style of writing. But if he clothed his literary self in old garments, the message was sufficiently new and striking. Like Voltaire, he unconsciously expressed the sentiments of a multitude. To paraphrase an old saw, a drop of ink thinks for millions, and Rousseau supplied the nut gall. Voltaire had cleared the intellectual field of superstitious stubble; it was Rousseau's task to sow the seed. Religious bigotry, never at any time absolutely dormant, was at least quiescent, and fanaticism had given place to a dull, uninteresting disbelief, a wearisome indifference which did not necessarily exclude *Ave Marias* and *Pater Nosters*. Faith in the goodness of humanity required rekindling, and even if Rousseau was not an optimist in the all-embracing sense of the word, he at least bade the world hope. His was no pointing finger of scorn, but the uplifted hand of enthusiasm, which shows why the Jacobins made *Le Contrat Social* their textbook.

We have seen how indignation at the general condition of things had fired his spirit. It was no transient phase like a slight attack of measles, giving discomfort for a time and under normal conditions as surely passing. Rather it obsessed his whole being in the manner of the ague. Peculiarly enough, even appropriately perhaps, the circumstance which gave him his first firm step on the rung of the ladder of fame was trivial in the extreme. He was tramping along the Vincennes road to visit Diderot one blazing summer day in 1749, perusing the *Mercure de France* as he went, when he came upon an advertisement which belied its importance by its insignificance. It announced a prize offered by the Academy of Dijon for an essay on "Has the Progress of Sciences and Arts contributed to corrupt or purify Morals?"—a

sufficiently comprehensive theme for the most untried of philosophers. According to Rousseau, he lay on the grass for half an hour and arrived at a solution of the problem. This is admittedly quick work, seeing that it remains an open question to this day, and is likely to do so. Laharpe would have us believe that Diderot proved a useful ally. "Which side are you going to take?" he is supposed to have asked when Rousseau mentioned the matter to him. "I am going to demonstrate," was the reply, "that the progress of art and science purifies manners." "Eh! that is the *pons asinorum*," retorted Diderot. "Take the other side—you will make a noise *du diable!*" The fact that Rousseau did "take the other side" is some evidence of the truth of the story, and in his *Confessions* the author states that he mentioned the matter on more than one occasion to the editor of the *Encyclopédie*, "who suggested some corrections."

His effort won the prize, was "crowned" by the aforementioned Academy on the 23rd August 1750, and what was vastly more important, it provoked discussion in Paris. In it we can trace the idea, already a topic of conversation by many people, of a return to nature—not necessarily to barbarism. He avers that "luxury, dissipation, and slavery have in all times been the punishment of the proud efforts we make to shake off the blessed ignorance in which eternal wisdom placed us." According to Rousseau, "this work, though full of force and fire, absolutely lacks logic and order. Of all I ever wrote, it is the weakest in reasoning, and the most devoid of humour and harmony. With whatever talent a man may be born, the art of writing is not easily learned." Three years later the learned *savants* of Dijon propounded a question as to the origin of inequality among men, and whether it is sanctioned by the law of nature? Rousseau

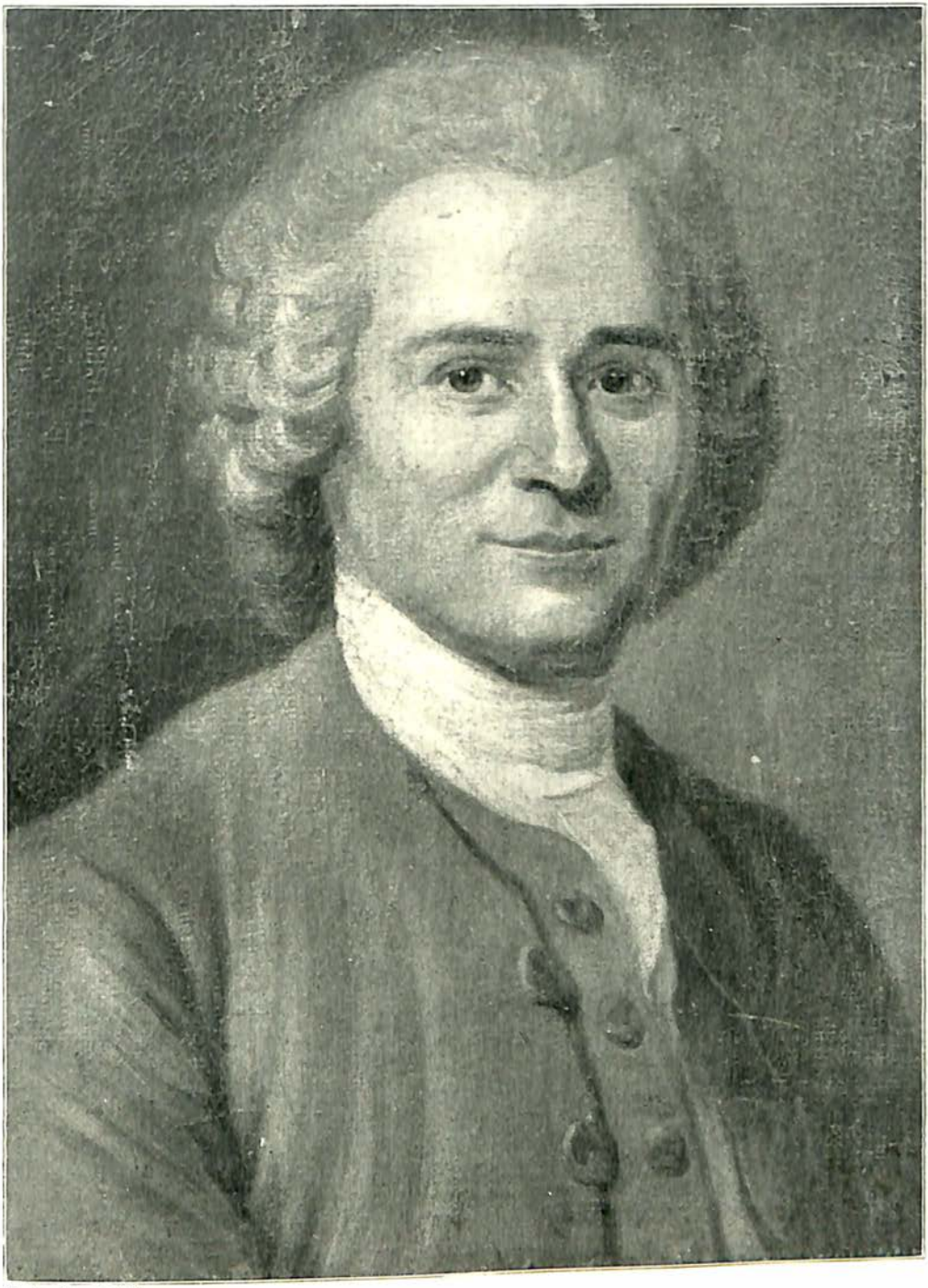


Photo Bouchetal

JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU (1712–1778)

(From an eighteenth-century painting in the Musée Carnavalet)

again entered, but his paper did not receive the reward its author anticipated. However, it was published in 1754. He starts "by putting aside all facts," to use his own words, and it is therefore obvious that he never intended the *Discourse on Inequality* to be read literally or as a scientific treatise. He indulges in violent invective against the existing state of society. While he does not maintain that all men are born equal, he insists that the social state accentuates artificial inequalities—which few of us can deny in a later day and generation.

Lord Morley, in his able study of Rousseau, has pointed out that the "Citizen of Geneva" at first says no good thing of the first property-owner, and shortly afterwards, in *Economie Politique*, pays a delicate compliment to property "as the pledge of the engagements of citizens and the foundation of the social pact, while the first condition of that pact is that every one should be maintained in peaceful enjoyment of what belongs to him." This, in the critic's opinion, is not due to insincerity, for "Rousseau was always apt to think in a slipshod manner, and sensibly though illogically accepted wholesome practical maxims as if they flowed from theoretical premises that were in truth utterly incompatible with them."[1] The sentimentalism of Rousseau was in marked contrast to the harsh, cynical sword-cuts of Voltaire, was in very truth balm to pour on the wounds made by the philosopher of Ferney. They were pioneers in a common cause who chose different paths.

It was in 1758 that Rousseau published his *Letter on the Theatre*, or *Letter to D'Alembert*, in reply to an article on Geneva in the celebrated *Encyclopædia*, in which the establishing of a theatre in the philosopher's birthplace was suggested.[2] It aroused Rousseau's fury, for to him the

[1] *Rousseau*, vol. i. pp. 187–92.

[2] See *post*, p. 118.

theatre was "a pernicious pleasure for small towns." As to large cities, their corruption made it of "minor consequence." Of deeper significance was *The New Héloïse*, a romance written in the form of letters and issued three years later. This Rousseau was busily engaged in penning at the Hermitage, Montmorency, while the public was eagerly purchasing copies of the *Letter*. It is a curious medley of emotionalism and reason, of passion and self-control, interlarded with a plentiful supply of morals, not the least being the suppression of discontent among the so-called lower orders of mankind by the dual qualities of simplicity and self-respect—one of Rousseau's favourite themes. To give a detailed synopsis of the narrative, including the many philosophic tributaries which flow into it, would occupy too much space, but the broad outline of the plot may be of interest. Julie, the heroine, is in love with her tutor, and confesses her affection for him after he has made known the longings of his heart. The idyll is disturbed by the visit of M. de Wolmar, whom Julie suspects her father wishes her to wed, and, to quote her own words, "I cannot marry without the approval of those who gave me life." She dare not confide her secret to her parents, but makes a confidante of her cousin Claire, who informs Julie that Lord Edward Bomston is also a candidate for the love already bestowed elsewhere. There is a dispute between the lord and the tutor following too much drink on the part of the former, and a duel is foreshadowed. Julie writes to the young aristocrat that he will slay "with a single stroke two hapless lovers." Thereupon Lord Edward apologises to the man he has wronged, and generally proves himself a most estimable fellow.

At the earnest entreaty of the amiable Claire, her lover M. d'Orbe and Lord Edward persuade the tutor to win fame in Paris and London. During the separation Julie's

mother dies, and her father insists on her marriage to M. de Wolmar. On being informed by Claire that "a married life" is the only likelihood of saving his sweetheart from the depressed state into which she has fallen, the tutor renounces all claims to her hand, and writes to her father to that effect. The distressed man then makes a tour of the globe with an English squadron under the command of Anson.

On his return to Europe the erstwhile tutor is asked by M. de Wolmar to stay with him and his wife, now the mother of two charming children. Saint Preux consents, and at the subsequent meeting pours out the travail of his soul to Lord Edward. Then one day the husband draws Julie and her former lover aside, confesses that he knew the secret of their love before his marriage, and asks his wife if he has succeeded in making her happy. "My dear husband," replies Julie, in tears, "you know you have succeeded." He goes on to say that the meeting had been arranged as a test, and congratulates them both.

Some time afterwards Saint Preux dreams that Julie is dead, but reassures himself by a surreptitious visit unknown to the object of his affection. The end of the romance is at hand. M. de Wolmar writes to inform him that his wife is dead after rescuing her youngest son from drowning, and enclosing a letter from Julie. "Fulfil her last requests," he concludes. "There yet remains much for you to do on earth." Julie's little note runs as follows:

"All is changed, my dear friend; let us suffer the change without a murmur. It was not well for us that we should rejoin each other.

"For it was an illusion that my love for you was cured; now, in the presence of death, I know that I still love you. I avow this without shame, for I have done

my duty. My virtue is without stain, my love without remorse.

"Come back to Clarens; train my children, comfort their noble father. Claire, like yourself, is about to lose the half of her life; let each of you preserve the other half by a union that in these latter days I have often wished to bring about.

"Adieu, sweet friend, adieu."

The story, based on the romantic attachment and self-abnegation of Abelard and Héloïse, is not without merit, but is interlarded with diffuse discourses on a multitude of subjects. Rousseau was administering sugar-coated pills to the public.

The year 1762 saw the publication of *Emilius*, a treatise on education which is remarkable in many ways, not merely because it prophesied the Revolution, but because it led to certain practical reforms in the method of bringing up children. That it would deify the lowly was only to be expected by Rousseau's admirers, for that was the root of his philosophy. The following passage may be cited as a preliminary blast of the trumpet which was to herald the downfall of aristocratic France:

"It is the common people who compose the human race; what is not the people is hardly worth taking into account. Man is the same in all ranks; that being so, the ranks which are most numerous deserve most respect. Before one who reflects, all civil distinctions vanish: he marks the same passions and the same feelings in the clown as in the man covered with reputation; he can only distinguish their speech, and a varnish more or less elaborately laid on. Study people of this humble condition; you will perceive that under another sort of language, they have as much intelligence as you, and more good sense. Respect your species: reflect that it

is essentially made up of the collection of peoples; that if every king and every philosopher were cut off from among them, they would scarcely be missed, and the world would go none the worse." Rousseau would have every one learn a trade, and when the emigration came his disciples pointed to the exiles as examples of the neglect of their master's teaching: "He who, among us, best knows how to sustain the good and the evil of this life is, according to me, the best trained; hence, true education consists less in precepts than in practice."

If *Emilius* did not add to Rousseau's already exalted reputation, it had far-reaching effects. High-born ladies, who previously had regarded their children as incumbrances, began to take an interest in them, and to perform certain duties of motherhood previously delegated to others. Much that is in our educational system to-day is due to the man upon whom persecution pressed sorely on the publication of his treatise.

We now come to *The Social Contract*, which it is important to remember is a scheme of government intended for a city of 20,000 souls, based on the old ideal of "the sovereignty of the people," and utilising some of the machinery which once obtained in Rome, Sparta, and Venice. In a word, it was an appeal to set the clock back, or rather to stop it and begin anew. Inequality is recognised, equality of opportunity most emphatically taught, and patriotism is extolled. Although one or two historical references are made, the treatise as a whole is based on speculation, often of the wildest kind, but it happened to supply "the long-felt want," and many of the fiery iconoclasts of Paris afterwards pinned their faith to it with the fervour of a Protestant for the Bible. I use the expression in no irreverent way, but as showing the intensity of their devotion. They were either totally

oblivious of the fact, or placed it far from them as of no consequence, that what might conceivably be utilitarian in so small a republic, with comparatively few citizens, was not exactly the best basis of government for a kingdom numbering more than a score of millions. Rousseau warns the legislator that if he is wise "he will not begin by writing down laws that are good in the abstract," but by observing the people for whom he wishes to make them; to note whether they are "capable of upholding them," and paying special regard to half a dozen extremely essential points, namely, "the situation of the country, the nature of the soil, the density of the population, the national history, occupations, and aptitudes." These points, it may be added, Rousseau himself usually failed to remember when in the throes of composition. "Among these considerations," he goes on, "one of the most important is the area of the state. As Nature has given limits to the stature of a normal man, beyond which she makes only giants or dwarfs, there are also limits beyond which a state is, in the one direction, too large to be well-governed, and, in the other, too small to maintain itself. There is in every body politic a maximum of force which cannot be exceeded, and from which the state often falls away by the process of enlarging itself. The further the social bond is extended, the slacker it becomes; and, in general, a small state is proportionately stronger than a large one." That the Idol of the Revolution fully appreciated the fatal centralisation bequeathed to France by *le Grand Monarque* is shown by his remark that "administration becomes more troublesome with distance. It increases in burdensomeness, moreover, with the multiplication of degrees. Each town, district, and province has its administration, for which the people must pay. Finally, overwhelming everything, is the remote central

administration." With his love of paradox, he adds, "Uniform laws are not suitable for diverse provinces; yet diverse laws among people belonging to the same state breed weakness and confusion." A true democracy "never has existed, and never will. It is against nature that the many should govern, and the few be governed. A people composed of gods would govern itself democratically. A government so perfect is unsuited to men."

Again, drawing on the times in which he lived, the philosopher avers that "it is to the interest of the monarch to keep the people in a state of weakness and misery, so that they may be unable to resist his power," that the important posts at the monarch's disposal are "occupied by burghers and rascals who win their promotion by petty court intrigue." In an elective monarchy he sees a cause of disorder on the death of its representative, and an hereditary monarchy "leaves the character of the king to chance." He proves nothing; indeed, *The Social Contract* is more destructive than constructive, written as it is from the heart, and not from the brain. It discolours white and adds depth to that which is already black. "Honour to victorious Analysis," cries Carlyle; "nevertheless, out of the Workshop and Laboratory, what thing was victorious Analysis yet known to make? Detection of incoherences, mainly; destruction of the incoherent. . . . That a new young generation has exchanged the Sceptic Creed, *What shall I believe?* for passionate Faith in this Gospel according to Jean Jacques is a further step in the business; and betokens much."

Robespierre and Mirabeau gloried in Rousseau's screeds, Kant and Schiller reverenced them. It would not be a difficult matter to compile an anthology at once vitriolic and fulsome in detraction and praise anent the citizen of Geneva. On the one hand, Morley and Mac-

donald, on the other Lamartine and Lemaître. The warfare is not yet finished, and both historian and psychologist will continue to dissect the writings and the brain of Rousseau. One thing alone is evident—the seed sown by him which ripened into the harvest of weeds and thistles at the Revolution.

CHAPTER IX

DIDEROT AND THE *ENCYCLOPÉDIE*

"The seeds of the Revolution were sown by the writers who, in an enlightened and enterprising age, when aiming a blow at prejudices, upset religious and social principles, and by the unskilled minister who increased the deficit of the Treasury and the discontent of the people." TALLEYRAND.

THE eighteenth-century Renaissance was not entirely due to Voltaire and Rousseau. Others helped in the revival of thought and learning, and of these Diderot and D'Alembert are markedly conspicuous, the former as editor of the famous *Encyclopédie*, the latter as Diderot's assistant in the production of this many-tomed work. We have noted the influence of English thought on the mind of the Philosopher of Ferney and of the Sage of Les Charmettes, and although it is not so evident in the literary productions of Diderot, he ever held Newton in high esteem, and called the novelist Richardson "that sublime genius." Ephraim Chambers's *Cyclopedia*, the first edition of which appeared in two volumes in 1728, was certainly the father of the *Encyclopédie*, for Le Breton, the Paris bookseller, showed Diderot a copy of a translation of it before the final arrangements for the publication of a French rival were made.

Denis Diderot was born in 1713—four years before D'Alembert, one year later than Rousseau—at Langres, in Champagne. He once remarked that "the head of a Langrois is on his shoulders like a weather-cock on a church steeple; it is never fixed in one point. . . . With a surprising quickness of movements, of desires, of plans, of fancies and ideas, they are slow of speech. As for me,

I belong to my country." The simile is excellent, with the exception that Diderot was a renowned talker. Perhaps he was enjoying a joke at his own expense. His education in the tragedy of life came early, for as a mite of three he was taken to witness an execution, presumably as "a great treat." As a schoolboy he encountered the machinations of the Jesuits, when a priest endeavoured to carry him off to Paris with a view to his becoming a member of the society. His father suggested that Denis should become a doctor, *procureur*, or lawyer. With that ready wit which never failed him, he replied that he did not wish to be the death of any man, which precluded him from accepting the first choice; a *procureur's* office was difficult to fill with propriety, and as an *avocat* he would have to meddle with other people's business, which he resented. Whereupon the cutler stopped his son's allowance, and decided that he should either earn his bread or starve. Fortunately for young Diderot, his mother was more humane, and secretly sent him little doles whenever she managed to save sufficient from her none-too-plentiful supply of housekeeping money. The succeeding ten years were bitter-sweet; sometimes he enjoyed a good meal, at others he wandered about with empty stomach and aching heart. He taught mathematics, for which he had a consuming passion, compiled catalogues, did a few translations, even took to writing sermons. On one occasion he was reduced to a state of starvation, and was only rescued from his pitiable condition by his landlady, who gave him toast steeped in wine to restore his failing strength. Diderot vowed that if ever he saw a wretch in a similar condition he would help him, provided he had the wherewithal, and he kept his oath. At thirty he committed the sublime indiscretion of a young man with nothing a year by getting married,

the lady of his choice being Mademoiselle Champion, the daughter of a ruined manufacturer who had turned seamstress to keep body and soul together. She and her mother nursed her happy-go-lucky lover through a dangerous illness before she became his wife; he rewarded his pretty Antoinette's devotion by giving his love to mistresses and breaking her heart. It was the way of the world in those profligate days, and is not unknown in these.

Diderot did not console himself with other women at first; Love did not immediately fly out of the window as Poverty entered. Denis worked as hard as a spasmodic nature would allow him on translating a history of Greece from the English, and his mother-in-law and Antoinette stitched as he wrote. When he was earning nothing there were always six *sous* forthcoming from the self-sacrificing women for Diderot's cup of coffee at the Café de la Régence, for he must needs enjoy a little "society." Then followed the *Essay on Merit and Virtue, Philosophic Thoughts*, and a *Letter on the Blind for the use of those who See.* One can imagine his Satanic Majesty grinning as Diderot's pen covered sheets of paper with fine words on merit and virtue for the benefit of Madame de Puisieux, with whom he had formed an illicit attachment. His *Philosophic Thoughts* were written with the same end in view, the obtaining of money—in this case a matter of fifty *louis*—for his mistress. It also gained for him a certain amount of notoriety, for the pamphlet was burnt in public by order of the *Parlement* of Paris. A copy of the *Letter on the Blind* was sent to Voltaire, and duly acknowledged by him in flattering terms. From henceforth they were friends and fellow-workers in the crusade for the liberation of ideas. This literary effort also obtained for him a temporary residence in the fortress

of Vincennes, for it contained a none too covert reference to a Court favourite who had relations with d'Argenson, the War Minister. Diderot's newly-formed friendship with Voltaire now bore fruit. The witty Madame du Châtelet, the philosopher's *autre cœur* for two decades, pleaded in the prisoner's behalf with the governor, and he was removed to the castle and put on parole. At Vincennes he renewed his acquaintance with Rousseau, with results already mentioned.[1] "I found him," the latter writes of Diderot, "much affected by his imprisonment. The dungeon had made a terrible impression upon his mind, and although he was very comfortably situated in the castle, and at liberty to walk where he pleased in the park, which was not enclosed even by a wall, he wanted the society of his friends to prevent him from yielding to melancholy. As I was the person most concerned for his sufferings, I imagined I should also be the friend the sight of whom would give him consolation; on which account, notwithstanding very pressing occupations, I went every two days at furthest, either alone or accompanied by his wife, to pass the afternoon with him."

It would not be difficult to fill the remainder of this volume with the story of the *Encyclopédie*, with its essentially modern view of things, important and trivial. It was, according to the editor, "a general picture of the efforts of the human spirit in every field, in every age," a sufficiently comprehensive programme for the most enterprising of twentieth-century publishers with all but unlimited resources. Diderot worked for twenty long years with amazing energy for a sum which never exceeded £130 per annum, turning for relief from philosophy and metaphysics, the history of iniquitous taxes and statistics of industrial France, to help Grimm in the

[1] See *ante*, p. 104.

production of the *Correspondance Littéraire*, read proofs for friends—as though he had not sufficient of his own—write criticisms of pictures, pen fifth-rate plays which always failed, and write pornographic novels. Everything he penned for his serial was anti-rut; there was nothing conservative about him, with the possible exception of a life-long partiality for heavy dinners. Le Breton trembled for his own safety, and as the work proceeded, took the precaution of having it extra-edited by a literary drudge, who toned down or deleted what he thought undesirable. When the secret was out, Diderot set to work to repair the damage, caring nothing for either bookseller or official authority.

Diderot gathered around him the most brilliant intellects of France, including Rousseau, who wrote some of the articles on music and a treatise on Political Economy. He also secured the learned d'Alembert, the foremost geometrician of Europe, to write the preface and to assist him in an editorial capacity. In 1750 the first volume appeared. Two years later it was suppressed, together with its immediate successor, although the work as a whole was allowed to continue. This procedure was repeated from time to time. Voltaire relates a pleasing story, which may or may not be true, of how it came about that the confiscated copies were returned. One evening at supper Louis XV was discoursing on gunpowder. When the question of its composition arose, no one present could enlighten him. Madame de Pompadour then expatiated on the ignorance of mankind in general, and admitted that she knew nothing of the manufacture of the rouge she used or the silk hose she wore. "'Tis a pity," put in the Duc de la Vallière, "that his Majesty confiscated our *Encyclopædias*, which cost us 100 *pistoles*." The King recollected that he had twenty-

one volumes of Diderot's work stored away at the Trianon, and forthwith ordered them to be brought. Having satisfied himself that the subjects under discussion were dealt with at length, and incidentally discovered the rights of his crown set forth, he removed the ban.

Whatever faults are laid to Diderot's charge, and however much we may differ from him in opinion, there can be no doubt that he took his work very seriously and possessed a noble ideal which he sought to attain. "A pleasure that I enjoy alone affects me but slightly, and is of short duration," he says in a splendid passage of vivid introspection. "It is for my friends that I read, that I reflect, that I write, that I meditate, that I listen, that I look, that I feel. In their absence I am still devoted to them, I am continually thinking of their happiness. If I am struck with a beautiful line, they must know it. If I meet with a fine passage, I promise myself to impart it to them. If I have before my eyes some enchanting spectacle, I unconsciously plan a description of it for their benefit. I have consecrated to them the use of all my senses and faculties; and it is perhaps for this very reason that everything becomes somewhat enriched in my imagination and exaggerated in my discourse. Nevertheless, the ungrateful creatures sometimes reproach me.

"My life has not been stolen, I have given it away; and what could be better than conferring a portion of it on him who respects me sufficiently to solicit this present?"

In 1759 Diderot was left to carry on his vast undertaking alone, for D'Alembert ceded because of his quarrel with Rousseau in the matter of his article on Geneva, to which Jean Jacques retorted in *Sur les Spectacles*. With pen in hand and the sword of Damocles in the shape of threats and acts continually hanging over him, Diderot

continued his labours for six years. The concluding tomes appeared in 1765, although it was not until 1772 that he was quit of the *Encyclopédie* by the publication of ten volumes of plates. Writing from Paris in 1766 Horace Walpole observes that "the generality of the men, and more than the generality, are dull and empty. They have taken up gravity, thinking it was philosophy and English, and so have acquired nothing in the room of their natural levity and cheerfulness."

A little while later, having sold his library for some £700 to Catherine II of Russia to provide a *dot* for his daughter Angélique, Diderot was invited by the Empress, who was a great patron of literature and the arts, to visit Petersburg. He went, and it is alleged that on more than one occasion he emphasised his remarks by a prolific banging of the imperial knees, either mistaking them for his own or in a spasm of excitement engendered by a heated discussion. Diderot was always that way, emphatic, careless of convention, a "hail fellow well met." He died in his chair in his house in the Rue Richelieu in 1784, having given expression to the belief that "the first step towards philosophy is unbelief," a cutting cynicism not altogether devoid of fact, and a fitting parallel to the remark attributed to D'Alembert's foster-mother, who defined a philosopher as "a fool who plagues himself all his life that he may be spoken of after death."

A year before Diderot ate his way to death—for he breathed his last after consuming a peach notwithstanding that he had been warned not to do so—his collaborator had paid the Great Debt. D'Alembert was the illegitimate son of Madame de Tencin and Chevalier Destouches, the former of whom had sought to conceal her indiscretion by exposing the new-born babe on the steps of the

Church of St. Jean le Rond, where it was found by the wife of a poor glazier named Rousseau. In due course Madame de Tencin was only too proud to acknowledge her offspring. It says much for Jean le Rond d'Alembert that he refused to listen to her entreaties. "I am your mother," she told him. "You my mother, madame?" was his quiet reply. "You are mistaken; I have no mother but her who took care of me in my infancy."

His devotion to the vivacious and pock-marked Julie de Lespinasse, once a reader to Madame du Deffand, but later a leader of her own *salon*,[1] is one of the romances of history. As though to prove that "love is blind," he wrote to Hume, "She is somewhat marked, but without being disfigured the least in the world." The fact that she was also illegitimate is eloquent of the lack of morals at this period. However faithful the author of *Philosophical, Historical, and Philological Miscellanies* may have been to his Julie, she was certainly not true to him. Unknown to her lover, the Marquis de Mora and General Guibert shared her affections. Amongst the papers found at her death in 1776 were several letters written to her by the former, but not a single one from D'Alembert. Marmontel described her as possessing the most ardent soul since the far-off days of Sappho. D'Alembert sadly missed her company, and endeavoured to assuage his sorrow by becoming more and more engrossed in his work as secretary to the French Academy, until his death in 1783. Writing of the little gatherings which D'Alembert held in his apartment in the Louvre, Baron de Frénilly, who attended some of them, says that the great mathematician's "small body was buried in a large armchair, just as his keen eyes were buried in his peruked head. He spoke only in sallies of

[1] See *post*, p. 121.

wit and humour, on subjects suggested by others; rarely did he furnish matter for conversation. The only thing I clearly recollect as coming from him was an inscription which he proposed for Fénelon's tomb: 'Passer-by, efface not this name with thy tears, so that I in turn may weep.'" Frénilly's comment on this is, "Never was anything so ridiculously academic."

The *Encyclopédie* was the literary organ of advanced thought; the habitués of the *salons* were its disseminators. The *salon* was no new institution; it had its genesis in the famous reunions at the Hôtel de Rambouillet at the beginning of the seventeenth century, when Louis XIII was on the throne, and continued to flourish until the death of the beautiful Madame Récamier in 1849, at the time of the Second Republic, and soon after Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte had been elected President. At the receptions of such notable women as Madame du Deffand, Madame d'Épinay, Mlle. de Lespinasse, and Madame Geoffrin, to mention four particularly prominent hostesses, the *grands seigneurs philosophes* lived, and moved, and had their social being. Here subjects sane and serious, flippant and foolish, were discussed in that wholly interesting and vivacious manner so uniquely associated with Frenchmen and Frenchwomen, the most voluble folk on the face of the globe. Here epigrams light as air or deep as the ocean were tripped off, possibly not always without deep and serious thought beforehand, in the joyful expectation that its maker would find himself famous when he awoke in the morning, or at least before he put in an appearance at the next supper. It was at Madame du Deffand's more particularly that really distinguished company was found. She was the confidante of Voltaire, D'Alembert, Henault, Montesquieu, Crawford, and Horace Walpole; she entertained

everybody who was anybody. Marmontel and Thomas patronised the *salon* of Madame Geoffrin; at D'Holbach's country seat Diderot and Grimm met their satellites and talked science, letters, and frivolity, while all three enjoyed pleasant little suppers at Madame d'Epinay's.

"In the houses of Madame Geoffrin, of Baron d'Holbach, of Helvetius, the philosophers were at home"; says Thiers; "at Madame du Deffand's they found themselves in the presence of those whose minds they led astray whilst preparing their ruin."

CHAPTER X

THE FIRST YEARS OF LOUIS XVI

"*It was weakness, sire, which laid the head of Charles I on the block*"—TURGOT.

"THE King's face was not agreeable, but very noble. The Queen was fresh and radiant, and her face was animated with goodness and gaiety. Dressed in white, they sat in one of those magnificent carriages which were monuments of sculpture and chiselling, and which have since been imitated so meanly. I was struck by the pacific, elegant, almost gallant nature of the pomp. There was nothing military about it. Everything was civil: the officers of the various *maisons*, those of the stables, the company of the royal chases, and the falconers. Even the Cent Suisses, with their ancient ruffles, and the bodyguards, in their handsome red and blue costumes, thickly covered with gold, awakened no warlike idea."

Thus writes Baron de Frénilly of the entry of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette into Paris after the death of "the Well-beloved." It was unfortunate for France that this youth of twenty was called to occupy the throne at so critical a period. What the nation most wanted was a man of strong character, a Napoleon with peaceful instincts, and that is exactly what Louis was not. Yet there is something noble about his character, something that makes you admire the man and even love him in the closing period of his life, when the mob is at his throat and his power has been usurped by King Guillotine. It is the nobleness of one who is brave in times of stress and trial, and yet lacks definite decision in those

ordinary moments so frequently fraught with extraordinary results. "He was one of the best and kindest of men," says Baroness Cecile de Courtot, "and stood intellectually much higher than is popularly declared. But his mind worked slowly, and he had great difficulty in coming to a decision in critical moments. Thus it came about that he soon depended on the Queen to decide for him. But at the root of the matter lay the fact that it was not in him to be a king, as we French understand the term. We are essentially a nation that demands a representation full of pomp and glory and splendour, and prides itself on being looked up to by other nations with admiration and wonder. This position it undoubtedly held under the hapless King's two predecessors, Louis XIV, who thoroughly understood how to manage his people, and Louis XV, the Well-beloved, though both these monarchs tyrannised over and drained the nation at every available point. And now, after these magnificent potentates comes an unpretentious, almost puritanically simple prince who never offered the people any opportunity for satisfying their craving for glory and display. What was Paris to do with such a man?"

He meant so well; that is the pity of it. History, indeed, goes to prove that such folk seldom achieve anything of consequence, and the tragedy of "good intentions" has been immortalised in a passage of literature which has become a proverb. To State affairs Louis brought "too little information and no will of his own," as Mercy wrote to Kaunitz in 1784. Certainly the early training of Louis XVI was not calculated to broaden his mind or give him that courageous self-reliance which might have saved his throne and his head. His tutor, the Duc de la Vauguyon, taught him little of the science of government beyond endeavouring to inculcate in him

Marie Antoinette d'Autriche, Sœur de
l'Empereur, Reine de France et de Navarre
Née à Vienne le 2 Novembre 1755
Mariée à Versailles le 16 Mai 1770

MARIE ANTOINETTE (1753–1793) AT THE TIME OF HER ACCESSION TO THE THRONE

(*From the mezzotint by R. Brookshaw published at Paris in* 1774)

a hatred of Austria, the hereditary enemy of France, initiated him into none of the lessons of history, and gave marked preference to the study of foreign languages. Louis preferred geography, map-making, carpentering, and lock-making. He was also interested in religion, but in a morbid, introspective kind of way, which may account for his first remark to his courtiers when they informed him of the death of his grandsire. "My God!" he cried, "guide us, protect us: we are too young to reign!" What might have been a noble appeal was marred by the confession of utter weakness with which it ended. This morbidity, increased by the knowledge of a certain physical defect afterwards relieved by a simple operation, marred the first years of his marriage to the beautiful Marie Antoinette.

Portraits of Marie Antoinette abound in profusion, both in paint and ink, and they differ in splendour as the planets in glory. It is no cause for wonder that "the charming Dauphine" of the people, who at least recognised and admired beauty, although they disliked the match, was considered anything but prepossessing by the demirep Madame du Barry. "I see nothing at all attractive in the little red-haired thing," this impudent and tyrannical courtesan remarked to Louis XV when she first saw the impulsive daughter of Maria Theresa. How different the portraiture of Edmund Burke, writing with all the passionate ardour of a political pamphleteer and the love of beauty inherent in every Irishman. He studied his model at Versailles, "and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in—glittering like the morning star, full of life, and splendour, and joy." From such a fairy-like vision

let us descend to the more detailed account of Bachaumont in his secret memoirs, which he calls an "exact portrait": "This princess is of a height proportioned to her age, thin without being emaciated, and such as a young girl is when not fully formed. She is very well made, well proportioned in all her limbs. Her hair is a beautiful blonde; I judge it will some day be a golden chestnut; it is well planted on her head. Her forehead is fine; the shape of her face a handsome oval, but a little long; the eyebrows are as well marked as a blonde can have them. Her eyes are blue, but not insipid; they sparkle with a vivacity full of intelligence. Her nose is aquiline, a little sharp at the tip. Her mouth is small, the lips full, especially the lower one, which everyone knows to be the Austrian lip. The whiteness of her skin is dazzling, and she has a natural colour which dispenses her from putting on rouge. Her dignity and bearing are those of an archduchess; but her dignity is tempered by gentleness; and it is difficult on seeing this princess to refuse her a respect mingled with tenderness."

Those who believe in portents of disaster and the signification of inauspicious beginnings may reflect on two coincidences in the career of Marie Antoinette, Archduchess of Austria. A few hours after her coming to life, on the 2nd November 1755, between 20,000 and 30,000 folk went out to meet death by fall, flood, and flame in the city and environs of Lisbon; on the night of her wedding a heavy thunderstorm swept over Paris and the festivities were marred by a crush that maimed and killed hundreds of people. From first to last she was the victim of political policy, and although she seldom acted wisely when she reached the so-called "years of discretion," and Austria meant more to her than France, thanks to family interference,

LOUIS XVI (1754–1793) AT THE TIME OF HIS ACCESSION TO THE THRONE

(From the mezzotint by R. Brookshaw published at Paris in 1774)

it was her misfortune, and not her choice, that she became Madame la Dauphine. She was the human cement used to promote an alliance between France and Austria, which, in the opinion of the imperious Maria Theresa and the dandy-genius Kaunitz, her chief Minister, would bring untold blessings to both nations. The negotiations were protracted, thanks to the lethargy of Louis XV, and it would have been well for the girl of fifteen had they never been concluded; but he gave his tardy consent at last, and the children were married in the May of 1770. If there be any truth in the assertion that opposite natures attract, the match from a purely personal point of view should have been a good one, as indeed it was after the birth of the Dauphine's first child; but several years elapsed before that event, and the nation, as usual, blamed the wife. Allowed to run wild in the great rambling palace of Schoenbrünn, to the almost complete neglect of her education, she attempted much the same thing in the stiff and formal Court of her adoption. She played cards for big stakes, showed a fondness for jewels and display, and was indiscreet and human enough to make favourites, and consequently enemies. Her unconventional ways, her open and often-repeated repugnance to preposterous but perhaps necessary etiquette, afforded a plentiful supply of gossip for idle tongues, which grew into scandal, and was so frequently repeated that the good folk of Paris and elsewhere, who had no opportunity of finding out the rights and wrongs of the intelligence so glibly and confidentially vouchsafed to them, accepted the wrongs as matter of fact. This is why the children of the Revolution were told that Marie Antoinette was "a Messalina in ferocity, an Agrippina in shamelessness." Maria Theresa warned her daughter of her indiscretions, and told her that unless she showed more prudence she

would lose her throne, and even her life. Similar advice, plus the needs of Austria, was continually dinned in her ears by the importunate Mercy, ambassador of her native country at Versailles. She did not learn her lesson until it was too late. That she held her imperious mother in deep respect is proved by her letters. Writing to her sister, Marie-Christine, wife of the Stadholder of the Netherlands, in 1785, several years after the death of the Empress, and when Paris was agog with the scandal of the diamond necklace,[1] she says: "Our mother is ever present to me, and I do not forget that the blood of Maria Theresa flows in your veins and in mine. You shall never hear anything of me unworthy the daughter of such a mother."

In his choice of Chief Minister, in fact but not in name, Louis was unfortunate. The Comte de Maurepas, whom he recalled at the behest of Madame Adélaïde from his exile at Bourges, where he had lived for nearly a quarter of a century, was no statesman, and at seventy-three could not be expected to display over-much energy. A politician perhaps—there were many—certainly a courtier—almost as common as pigeons—and a maker of witty epigrams, with whom the *salons* were crowded, but little else. An admirer and friend of the Encyclopedists, Louis found in Turgot and Malesherbes men pledged to reform; in Vergennes, a man capable of a strong foreign policy. Turgot was appointed Minister of Marine in July 1774. This post he held for five weeks, and afterwards became Controller-General. Malesherbes entered into office in July 1775 as head of the King's household. The Maréchal de Muy became Minister for War in the place of D'Aiguillon, who had filled that office and also conducted Foreign Affairs since the down-

[1] See *post*, p. 152.

fall of "calm, resolute Choiseul." De Muy held his position until his death in October 1745, when he was succeeded by the more competent St. Germain. Of these ministers the most noteworthy is Turgot, while Malesherbes, who speedily resigned, claims fame as the friend of Protestants and the impassioned defender of the King in the stormy days of '93, for which he was arrested and guillotined. He did much for the liberty of the Press. For instance, when Diderot informed him that a raid on the *Encyclopédie* was contemplated, Malesherbes told him to send the copies to his house. This was done and the issue was saved. At the moment our chief interest centres around the leader of the party known as the Economists, than whom no man of more sterling worth will be found in these pages.

Although not a slavish disciple of Voltaire, Turgot had gradually developed sceptical opinions after having taken a theological degree at the Sorbonne. Honest with himself, he determined to be honest with others. He abandoned sermons for legal documents, and became Deputy-Counsellor of the Procureur-General. After having served as Master of Requests, written articles for Diderot's great organ of opinion, and made the acquaintance of many liberal thinkers, he became Intendant of the Limousin, and here his public life really began. He put his theories into practice, bombarding Versailles with requests for this, that, and the other reform until they were granted out of sheer relief from the worry of constantly refusing them. Turgot relieved the taxes, which meant much to the poor, secured free trade in grain, which relieved them still further, assisted in the promotion of agriculture on something approaching scientific lines, rid the province of wolves, and did much good without making a great fuss about it. Peasants blessed,

nobles cursed him. To be sure, he had little time for literary work, and this was essentially the epoch of such endeavour, but after meeting our own Adam Smith he wrote and published *Reflections on the Reformation and Distribution of Wealth*, which did not altogether fall fallow. His reward came when he was appointed Minister of Marine at the suggestion of a former schoolfellow, who had the supreme wisdom to approach the wife of Maurepas instead of the Minister himself.

It was scarcely to be expected that a man could bring about any kind of reform, especially in a State department, in the short time of five weeks. It takes that period for the average Government official to accommodate himself to his surroundings, let alone to begin work. Not so Turgot. He went through dossiers, interrogated clerks, worked early and late in his endeavour to pierce to the heart of things. Then, as ever, the lonely had his first call. For instance, some poor wretched workmen in the shipyards of Brest had eighteen months' arrears of wages due to them, and no amount of clamouring on their part had availed at Versailles. Turgot paid them in full without further ado. When he was appointed to the far more important post of Controller-General of Finances on the 24th August 1774, his brain was teeming with plans for the colonies, schemes which he was never to put into execution. He must have realised the hopelessness of his task, but the chief tenet of his creed was a firm belief in growth and progress, in which the burden of original sin, hitherto the bugbear of the race, had little part. So sanguine a believer in the essential goodness of mankind was not easily daunted, and he bent his shoulder to the task, veritably that of Atlas. In his control of the finances he began on the assumption of equality, that all, including the classes hitherto exempt, should help in the support of

the State. He abolished the hated *corvée*, substituting for it a tax payable by all landowners, the abolition of privileges of those corporations and monopolies which had outlived their day, and whatever good they may have done in the past to foster industry now retarded it. He thus summed up his programme and his position to the King: "We will have no bankruptcies, no augmentation of taxes, no loans. I shall have to combat abuses of every kind; to combat those who are benefited by them, and even the kindness, Sire, of your own nature. I shall be feared, hated, and abused; but the affecting goodness with which you pressed my hands in yours to witness your acceptance of my devotion to your service, is never to be obliterated from my recollection, and must support me under every trial."

Bribery and jobbery were to him anathema. He restored free trade in grain, following the plan he had adopted as an Intendant. Voltaire applauded; "the Infamous" saw in the some-time contributor to the *Encyclopédie* an arch-enemy, and in this it was supported by the nobles. The mooted removal of Protestant disabilities only incensed the hatred of the Church to this brazen reformer. Turgot, gallant enough to provide Marie Antoinette with pin-money, introduced economies wherever possible, but none could point the finger of scorn at him and say that like most reformers he did not begin on himself. He steadfastly refused the recognised offerings of the Farmers-General, which custom had ordained and sanctioned as the due of the Controller when he attested his signature to a new edict. The Court and the Queen began to hate him; "vested interests" commenced to murmur; the King, to his everlasting honour, placed his faith in Turgot until he felt himself compelled to surrender to the majority. "It is

only Monsieur Turgot and I who love the people," he exclaimed; and the statement had in it more truth than is ordinarily the case with a sweeping generality. Even the poorer classes, excused by their ignorance, joined in the popular clamour against the enlightened statesman who was able and willing to do so much for them. There was scarcity of bread, due according to the mob to the free trade in grain; in reality to the failure of the harvest and the constantly decreasing number of acres devoted to corn raising because exportation and large stocks had been forbidden before the removal of the ban by the Minister. Riots took place, and the too-accessible precincts of Versailles itself were invaded by the mob. When the angry multitude had been dispersed Necker saw fit to publish a pamphlet on *The Legislation and Commerce of Grain.* It was very plausible, and very adverse to Turgot's policy. The *Parlement*, now re-established on the advice of Maurepas and against that of Turgot, who regarded it as a hive of privilege and not likely to vote against its own interests, vetoed his projects, with the usual sequel of a *Lit de Justice* to enforce submission. The Minister even preached economy, which is always the last resort of a spendthrift nation already far on its way to bankruptcy, in his budget.

Gradually the King was weaned from his Minister. By subtle suggestions, by the foolish printed vapourings of Monsieur,[1] by slander, by forged letters, the allegiance of Louis was withdrawn. According to the popular belief, the simple but comprehensive axiom of the detective service is, "Find the woman!" In this matter she is not far to seek. Marie Antoinette had been offended by Turgot's presumption in dismissing de Guines, the French Ambassador in London, and a *protégé* is always

[1] The Comte de Provence.

a genius to his benefactor. The Controller had thought otherwise and exercised his prerogative. The Court and the Queen won the toss for Turgot's dismissal; later they lost the game.

On the 12th May 1776 he was relieved of his duties, whereat Voltaire, safe in his retreat at Ferney, declared, "I am as one dashed to the ground. Never can we console ourselves for having seen the golden age dawn and perish. My eyes see only death in front of me, now that Monsieur Turgot is gone. It has fallen like a thunderbolt on my brain and my heart alike. The rest of my days can never be other than pure bitterness."

After Turgot things went steadily from bad to worse. He was, says Lord Acton, "the most profound and thorough reformer of the century."

CHAPTER XI

SPENDTHRIFT FRANCE

"All evils arise from the absence in France of a constitution."—TURGOT.

AFTER Turgot's dismissal in 1776 the finances were entrusted to Clugny de Nuis. He only lived to occupy his post for six months, during which he proved himself a thorough-paced reactionary, reinstating the hated *corvée*, and imposing anew the restrictions on corn. He was succeeded by the zealous and vain Necker, who had married Suzanne Curchod, the "inestimable treasure" beloved of Gibbon, and was father of Madame de Staël. In his fascinating *Autobiography* the man who "sighed as a lover" and "obeyed as a son" pays a delicate compliment to the banker of Lausanne which might be copied with advantage by others in a like predicament. "Of the merits and demerits of that statesman," he writes, "various opinions may be entertained; but all impartial men must agree in their esteem of his integrity and patriotism."

Like Turgot, Necker was a reformer, but with strictly defined limitations. His admiration of Rousseau knew scarcely any bounds, if we take his letters to his fellow-countrymen at their face value. A republican, he yet managed to serve a royal master without thought of inconsistency. In the commercial world his name was one to be reckoned with, and as a banker he not unnaturally pinned his faith to loans, which he raised with success and on favourable terms, thus relieving the sorely-taxed treasury and warding off the inevitable evil day for a time.

A Swiss, he was a suspect to many; a Protestant, he by no means enjoyed the good graces of the clergy, and because of his religion was never allowed to assume the title of Controller-General; an eradicator of sinecure offices and the pensions of idle favourites, he was the avowed enemy of the courtiers. Nevertheless Necker managed to steer the ship of State with considerable dexterity, and his success in negotiating successive loans was to prove of the utmost value when public opinion decreed that France should side with the American colonists in their effort to disown the Motherland. Already arms had been sent to the insurgents and American privateers fitted up in French ports, so that when Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane, and Arthur Lee set foot in Paris five months after the signing of the Declaration of Independence on the 4th July 1776, these Commissioners appointed by Congress did not find themselves in hostile territory. The reception accorded the former journeyman printer was particularly cordial, and the most exclusive *salons* opened their doors to him. "Figure me in your mind as jolly as formerly," he writes from Paris on the 8th February 1777, "and as strong and hearty, only a few years older; very plainly dressed, wearing my thin grey straight hair, that peeps out under my only *coiffure*, a fine fur cap, which comes down my forehead almost to my spectacles. Think how this must appear among the powdered heads of Paris."

Franklin's mission is thus detailed in his own words. He had been sent by Congress "to procure those aids from European powers, for enabling us to defend our freedom and independence, which it is certainly their interest to grant; as by that means the great and rapidly growing trade of America will be open to them all, and not a monopoly of Great Britain, as heretofore; a mon-

opoly that, if she is suffered again to possess, will be such an increase of her strength by sea, and if she can reduce us again to submission, she will have thereby so great an addition to her strength by land, as will, together, make her the most formidable power the world has yet seen; and, from her natural pride and insolence in prosperity, of all others the most intolerable."

"The people of this country are almost unanimously in our favour," he writes on the 1st May of the same year. "The government has its reasons for postponing a war, but is making daily the most diligent preparations; wherein Spain goes hand in hand."

The Declaration of Independence was in itself a compliment to *la belle France*, for some of the theories it embodied were obviously Rousseauian, and French ideas had coloured the political outlook of the just men and true who had drawn up the document. In due course the success of the colonists was to fire the land of their adopted and adapted creed with similar republican ambitions. What Voltaire, Rousseau, and the writers of the *Encyclopédie* did for the classes the returned soldiers did for the masses, the majority of whom could neither write nor read, and had taken a long time to realise that they could think. The troops who fought in America were in very truth heralds of the Revolution.

Young members of the aristocracy, such as Lafayette,[1] burning with ardour to save the new republic which cherished such lofty ideals, began to make preparations for crossing the water. A reference to Franklin's letters proves that he by no means encouraged officers in their

[1] The Château of Lafayette at Chavaniac, which contains many valuable souvenirs of him, is still standing, although in 1909 it narrowly escaped destruction by fire. A bronze equestrian statue of Lafayette, subscribed for by the children of America, is to be seen in Paris. There is also a statue at Versailles presented by the American colony of that place and of the capital.

ambition to assist the United States with their personal services. He told them plainly that "our armies are full; that there are a number of expectants unemployed, and starving for want of subsistence." He understood human nature too well not to appreciate the fact that many a family scapegoat was recommended to him for no other reason than a laudable desire on the part of his parents to send him to "the other end of the world." Such applications were Franklin's "perpetual torment," for people firmly believed that he had been sent to obtain recruits, notwithstanding his repeated statements to the contrary. "You can have no conception how I am harassed," he tells a correspondent whose ambition it was to assist the insurgents. "All my friends are sought out and teazed to teaze me. Great officers of all ranks, in all departments; ladies, great and small, besides professed solicitors, worry me from morning to night. The noise of every coach now that enters my court terrifies me. I am afraid to accept an invitation to dine abroad, being almost sure to meet some officer or officer's friend, who, as soon as I am just in good humour by a glass or two of champagne, begins his attack upon me. Luckily I do not often in my sleep dream of these vexatious situations, or I should be afraid of what are now my only hours of comfort. If, therefore, you have the least remaining kindness for me, if you would not help to drive me out of France, for God's sake, my dear friend, let this, your twenty-third application, be your last."

When news came of the surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga, France, delighted that her old enemy had received a set-back, recognised the independence of the United States, and shortly afterwards concluded a treaty of commerce and alliance. It is said that when Louis XVI signed the parchment he remarked to Vergennes, "You

will remember, sir, that this is contrary to my opinion." Had the King been of a more determined disposition he would have risked temporary unpopularity and kept good faith with England, which had given him not the slightest cause for offence. The treaty was regarded by that Power as tantamount to a declaration of war.

Choiseul, who, it will be remembered, had entertained the hope of doing something more practical than merely fanning the flames of discontent, had concentrated his attention on the navy, without the aid of which all the sentiment in the world was useless. His policy now bore fruit. D'Orvilliers fought an indecisive battle with Keppel off Ushant, and made good his escape under cover of night owing to the British admiral's supineness; D'Estaing's squadron sailed for America, eluded Howe's fleet by a lucky storm, and having made for the West Indies, landed some of the troops intended for the subjugation of St. Lucia. These afterwards surrendered, and the island was won for England. Such deeds seemed to show that Great Britain had lost something of her old prowess on the element hitherto regarded as particularly her own. Another pet project of "resolute Choiseul" was realised in 1789 when Vergennes, in accordance with the Family Compact, summoned Spain to take part in the naval contest. A second Armada prepared to threaten England, did indeed appear off Plymouth, to the alarm of all the good West-country folk, and with like ill-fortune was scattered by the winds. It came up with Admiral Hardy but did not risk a fight, and the bad weather that ensued parted the allies and drove them back in a shattered state. A much more serious attempt was made against Gibraltar, whose possession by England and the hope of securing it had contributed not a little to Spain joining the Family Compact in 1761.

The siege lasted from 1779 to 1783, and is one of the greatest in modern history. During these years both sides fought with praiseworthy determination, and made good the claims of Sir George Rodney and General George Eliott, afterwards Lord Heathfield, to a niche in the respective temples of naval and military fame. Rodney, in addition to capturing a valuable merchant fleet and defeating a Spanish squadron in the early days of 1780, also relieved and revictualled "the Rock."

In the same year a determined effort was made by Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, joined later by other Powers, to frustrate England's right of search in respect of neutral vessels, and war broke out between Great Britain and Holland. But so far as the making of the French Revolution is concerned it had entered on a new phase. Necker, having borrowed large sums of money to support the war, was really depleting the treasury and fondly imagining that at the conclusion of peace a "boom" in commerce and customs would set affairs right. In 1781 he issued his famous *Compte Rendu au Roi.* This national balance-sheet, hitherto intended for royal and official eyes only, may have been necessary in order to maintain confidence and raise further sums, but it also had the effect of stirring up strife in other than financial circles. It did not give a true account of affairs, for it showed a balance which had no foundation in fact. The exemption of the privileged orders from practically all taxation was glaringly obvious, the sums realised by the *taille* and such-like showed the large sums annually exacted from the "common" people, and the expenses of the Court were set down in figures that openly condemned its reckless extravagance. The King certainly moderated his expenses, the Queen not at all. Marie Antoinette continued to tread on what she fondly imagined were

rose-leaves, when in reality they were hot cinders. Necker's position speedily became untenable. Maurepas was jealous of him, and showed it; slanders were uttered and libels propagated which offended the susceptibilities of the statesman, who slaved like a bank clerk and enjoyed few of the sweets of office.

"Never shall I forget," he tells us, with something approaching self-pity, "the long dark staircase of M. de Maurepas, the terror and the melancholy with which I used to ascend it, uncertain of the success of some idea that had occurred to me, likely, if carried into effect, to produce an increase of the revenue; but likely, at the same time, to fall severely, though justly, on some one or other; the address, the expedients, I had to make use of to succeed; the sort of hesitation and diffidence with which I ventured to intermingle in my representations any of those great fundamental truths, those maxims of justice and of right, with which my own heart was animated. I was really like the ancient Sully when he stood surrounded by the young and tittering courtiers of Louis XIII."

The *Parlement* of Paris, "a body of salaried judges who purchased their appointments," objected to Necker's creation of three provincial assemblies, for it was a mild experiment in self-government, and as such loosened the spokes of the wheel of centralisation. Necker was firmly of opinion that his plan would aid administrative reform, as Turgot had believed before him in the matter of municipalities. The appointment of members devolved on the Government, and the Intendant was still supreme, but Necker established a precedent which was not forgotten at the time of the meeting of the States-General. The burgesses and unennobled proprietors of land composed one-half of the representatives, the *noblesse* and the

SOL GEMINUS NOSTRIS PARTITUR MUNERA TERRIS
DIVIDIT HIC LUMEN DIVIDIT ALTER OPES
Compo-sui Domus
Homo sum et nihil humani a me alienum puto.
Au bonheur de l'Etat consacrant ses talens,
Il va droit à son but, sans craindre les méchants:
Comme un autre Sully, ce Ministre fidele,
A la postérité servira de Modele.
ALLÉGORIE du Compte rendu au Roi par M. NECKER en 1781.

NECKER GIVES THE "COMPTE RENDU" TO THE KING

(From an engraving of 1781 in the Hennin Collection. Given by special permission of the French Government)

clergy a fourth each, thus making the "commons" equal to the privileged classes.

Towards the end of May 1781 Necker, ambitious to become a Minister of State and thwarted in his desire at every turn by the equally jealous Maurepas, resigned his office. After vain attempts on the part of Joly de Fleury and Lefèvre d'Ormesson to fill it, the control of the finances passed to M. de Calonne, one of the Queen's all-too-numerous favourites. Meanwhile important happenings had occurred abroad. Cornwallis had been forced to surrender on the 19th October 1781 owing to the blockade of York Town by the French and American fleets, and the cutting off of his communications with New York. In the West Indies better fortune had attended the British. Many islands had been conquered by them, and De Grasse's ambitious project against Jamaica was foiled by Rodney on the 12th April 1782. On the other hand, Minorca fell to the combined French and Spanish fleets after a siege of several months, and Suffren supported Hyder Ali and Tippoo Sahib in their war against the British dominion in the Carnatic. It was not until the 3rd September 1783 that peace was restored between Great Britain, the United States, France, Spain, and Holland.[1] The advantages were certainly not with England, which had piled up a debt of £100,000,000 sterling, more than double the amount the war had cost France.

Maurepas was now gathered to his fathers, and Vergennes had become first favourite. In the department of finance Calonne's policy was the exact opposite

[1] In 1910 Virginia presented to France a bronze replica of Jean Antoine Houdon's (1741–1828) magnificent statue of Washington. It stands in the Napoleon Hall of Versailles, in which palace the treaty of peace between Great Britain and the rebellious American colonies was made. In 1785 the artist went to America, where he sculptured the first President of the United States.

of that of Turgot and Necker as regards their insistence on the necessity for economy. Perhaps he flattered the latter by having recourse to loans, and honoured the memory of the former by entertaining hopes of equalising the taxes. Sir James Mackintosh, in his *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, written to refute Burke, refers to "the brilliant, profuse, and rapacious career of M. de Calonne." His terse summing-up is not far wrong. Necker certainly had some reasonable hope that when the war ended commerce would prosper, but Calonne went on borrowing when the country was at peace, and the annual deficit steadily rising. He was hailed as a financial genius when he began to pay the dividends upon public securities almost at the time they were due, a shock which presumably precluded the public from noticing that in order to do so he had raised a loan of 100,000,000 *livres*, on which interest had also to be paid. He squandered money lavishly, purchasing the goodwill of the courtiers, and even of the King and his brothers, by enabling them to pay debts and purchase palaces. Many people were deceived, of course, even so acute an observer as Gibbon. "At the beginning of a peace, and probably a long peace," he writes, "I think (and the World seems to think) the French funds as solid as our own." Calonne went on borrowing with such reckless avidity that in December 1785 the Paris *Parlement* positively refused to register the edict for a loan of 80,000,000 *livres* until the King forced it to do so. It was all so much wood stacked up for the touch of the torch to set ablaze. The situation was not improved by the extensive sale of Necker's lengthy *Administration of the Finances of France*, which secured its author's exile. He was forbidden the capital, and dared not approach within four leagues of it. The Controller-General himself was fast riding to a fall, for money he

must have, and he was speedily exhausting the credit of the Government. Could the people bear further taxation? Impossible! Would the privileged classes help him out of his financial slough of despond? Improbable!

Doubtless Beaumarchais, the erstwhile clockmaker and trafficker in arms and munitions of war to the American colonists, and later heralded as "a second Molière" by his fellow *concitoyens*, exactly expressed the sentiments of the average Frenchman in his *Mariage de Figaro*, produced at the Comédie Française in 1784. It had a long run, and has been called "the lever of the Revolution," for consent to produce it was to all intents and purposes wrested from the King. In this satire on the *ancien régime* are five pregnant sentences worthy of a far more advanced thinker than Beaumarchais, who lived to admire Napoleon. "Nobility, fortune, rank, office, how proud we are of them!" says Figaro. "What have you done to procure such blessings? You have taken the trouble to be born, no more! Otherwise an ordinary man! Whereas I, an insignificant unit in the crowd, have had to employ more science and calculation merely to gain my living than has been devoted in the last hundred years to the government of all the Spains."

The "unit" was to remain, his insignificance alone vanished. At the moment, or rather in the spring of 1785, whatever political ambitions he may have entertained were silenced by the more insistent appeal of the stomach. Scarcity followed drought, was indeed part and parcel of it, and the price of certain provisions went up alarmingly. The Town Guard of Paris was doubled for fear of riots. The peasants in many provinces were allowed to pasture their cattle in the royal domains, so great was the lack of fodder, yet vast numbers of the beasts died, the after-effects of which were felt severely twelve months later,

when many butchers were compelled to close their shops.

One need only take a hasty glance at the voluminous despatches written by representatives of the Court of St. James at Paris in 1786 to appreciate the fact that in their opinion the extravagance of the Court had much to do with the annual deficit.

"There appears at present," writes Hailes, our Minister Plenipotentiary, to Lord Carmarthen on the 24th August, "no disposition whatever to economy in the finances of this kingdom, and I understand that it will be necessary for the Comptroller-General to have recourse to another loan this year. Purchases of great value continue to be made, and works of immense expense to be carried on in different Royal establishments. M. de Calonne, by his unbounded liberality and complaisance to people of high rank and distinction, supports himself still in his most important situation, but the easing the burdens of the people and the interests of the Nation seem to be as perfectly disregarded as they ever were by the most corrupt of his predecessors. It is difficult to reconcile the idea of extreme profusion with that of the most pinching necessity at the same moment."

In an extremely lengthy communication, dated the 25th October, which is deserving of the most careful study,[1] Hailes sums up the information he has gathered after a residence of between two and three years in France. "It is to the Court, my Lord," he writes to Carmarthen, "that you must look for the source of the present evil. The Queen, not only during the latter years of the reign of the late King, but even till after the birth of the Dauphin, by which event the succession seemed in some

[1] *Despatches from Paris*, 1784–1790. Edited by Oscar Browning, M.A. (London: Royal Historical Society, 1909), pp. 143–154.

measure secured, was very far from enjoying that degree of power and influence which she is possessed of at present. But that event decided all the courtiers, and they hastened with precipitation to the standard of favour; whilst those who before had constituted her Majesty's intimate and circumscribed society, were soon consolidated into a formidable party in the State. The strong propensity of this Princess to every kind of pleasure and expense has been improved with great advantage by all those who have considered only their own elevation and advancement. Her pretended friends, by administering to her pleasures, are becoming the intimate participators of her secrets, and, having once got possession of them, they may, in fact, be said to be masters of their own mistress, and to have secured by that means to themselves the permanence of that power, which otherwise the changeableness of her disposition rendered extremely precarious."

Of Calonne the writer says that "No man was ever more systematic in his corruption. No minister was ever more studious to increase the jealousy of the Court with respect to the privileges of the Parliaments. The voice of the people is now and then, indeed, faintly heard indeed in their remonstrances, but as the avenues to the throne are all secured by the profusion of the minister to all who are in credit and power, it has little or no effect and dies away for want of being seconded." He adds that Louis is in receipt of an income "of upwards of six hundred millions" (*livres*), that a loan of 30,000,000, "to which the City of Paris was lately induced to set its name," for the ostensible purpose of new buildings and improvements, had been paid into the Royal Treasury, "the Government, out of its pretended ease having promised to issue annually for those public purposes the

sum of three or four millions, as the works proceeded." Vast naval works were going on at Cherbourg, additions to St. Cloud were estimated at 11,000,000 *livres*, fifteen hundred workmen were busily engaged at Fontainebleau. "Compiègne, Rambouillet, and other places have been improved in the greatest style of magnificence, and it is said that Versailles is very shortly to undergo a thorough repair, the expense of which can hardly be calculated." The establishments of his Majesty's brothers "are equal, perhaps, to those of some of the most independent Princes in Europe. The inconsiderate people of the Capital are, however, constantly boasting the immense resources of the Kingdom, without reflecting that those resources are found in the most wretched and oppressed class in mankind."

Hailes then draws attention to a marked change in national characteristics, which "are so much altered," he says, "that the French appear to be a different people to what they were before the beginning of the late war." With a touch of prophecy he adds, "Different circumstances have concurred to produce this effect, and men of a speculative turn of mind do not fail to discern in it, tho' at a distance, the most important revolutions. The intercourse of the French with the Americans whose manners and opinions could not but have influence, have brought them nearer to the English than they had ever been before. The almost unrestrained introduction of our daily publications (tolerated indeed by the Government from the conviction of the impossibility of preventing it) having attracted the attention of the people more towards the freedom and advantages of our constitution, has also infused into them a spirit of discussion of public matters which did not exist before. But amongst the most disadvantageous effects of this intercourse may

certainly be reckoned an almost universal taste for the elegancies and luxuries of British manufacture, a taste which, since the war, has turned the scale of trade entirely against this nation."

As regards the French navy, Hailes reports sixty-three or sixty-four sail-of-the-line "which might be put in a condition for sea in a short time," but the army "appears to have been neglected." The present establishment, including the militia, was about 200,000 men. "I have heard it said by more than one that, if, by any extraordinary revolution in the present system of Europe, the Courts of Vienna and Berlin were to be united against France, she must inevitably fall a sacrifice to their superiority in every respect." "Whatever ambitious views France may at this time entertain," the despatch concludes "(and there can be no doubt that she has many), they must necessarily be kept under by the badness of her own internal administration."

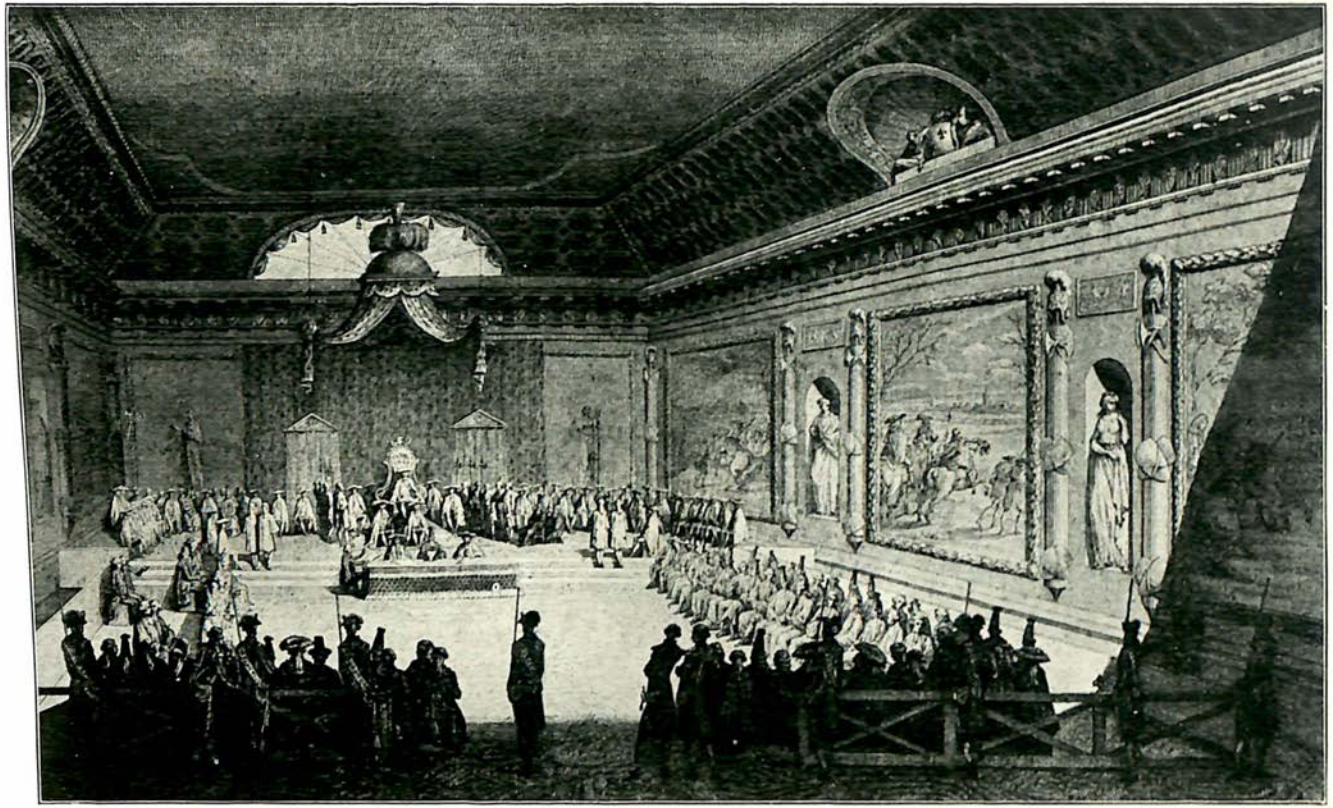
"M. de Calonne," writes the Duke of Dorset to Carmarthen on the 30th November 1786, "finds himself very much embarrassed by the enormous demands upon him for the expenses of the Court. The establishment of the Queen, exclusive of the salaries of her Majesty's principal officers of State, with the purchase and alterations of St. Cloud for the Dauphin, has amounted this year to thirty-eight millions of livres. In addition to these immense demands upon the Royal Treasury, the King is going on with the works at Rambouillet, Compiègne, and Fontainebleau, and next year, or the year after, a thorough repair of the Palace of Versailles will be absolutely necessary."

In the bright warm days of August 1786, Calonne informed Louis that the State was on the verge of bankruptcy, that the privileged classes must share the burden

of taxation, and that the best way to do this was by means of a general land-tax and stamp-tax. In return he would make various concessions, such as the suppression of the *corvée*, the internal customs-barriers, the institution of provincial assemblies, and so on. The *parlements* would, he felt, thwart his intentions, but it was absolutely necessary that something approaching the semblance of national sanction should be given to his far-reaching reforms. Why not convoke the Assembly of Notables, which had last met in 1626–7? Certainly it had neither the power to make laws, nor was it representative in character, but partaking of the nature of a genuine article it might prove a useful sham for the purpose of throwing political dust in the eyes of the people. The Third Estate was not altogether ignored, although princes, nobles, judges, and Government officials formed the majority of the members. While the privileged classes were unlikely to vote against their own interests, probably they would be less difficult to manage than the commoners, and might be induced to surrender something.

The first meeting took place at Versailles on the 22nd February 1787, and was opened by the King. Calonne laid down the principle, true enough if workable, that "it is not from economy that resources are to be expected, but from an augmentation of the revenues." On the second day the members broke up into committees, each having a Prince of the Blood—Monsieur, the Comte d'Artois, the Princes de Condé and de Conti, and the Dukes d'Orléans, de Bourbon, and de Penthièvre—as President.

The gatherings speedily proved to Calonne that he had stirred up a hornet's nest for himself. The Notables were in critical mood, required facts and figures, resented the minister's gratuitous criticism of Necker's administra-



THE ASSEMBLY OF THE NOTABLES HELD AT VERSAILLES, FEBRUARY 22, 1787

(Engraved after Veny and Girardet. From a print in the Hennin Collection, by special permission of the French Government)

tion, and negatived his demand for a universal land-tax. Having been informed that the Royal Will was irrevocably fixed in the matter of reform, and that their duty was merely to find out ways and means, they politely requested to know the full extent of the deficit. Calonne admitted to 113,000,000 *livres;* Loménie de Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, hungry and thirsty for power as well as place, begged to differ, and figured it at 140,000,000 *livres*, which was tantamount to saying that the Controller-General, the *ministre par excellence* of the Court, was a liar to the extent of 27,000,000 *livres.* That the States-General should be called to examine the accounts was the expressed opinion of many of the Notables, which brought forth from Dorset the remark that "if that sort of Spirit should gain ground I should not be surpriz'd at any proceeding, however violent, of the Court." So bitter did the hostility to Calonne become that Louis, encouraged by Marie Antoinette and others, dismissed him. He did it kindly and well, so well that the ex-minister's pension was considerably greater than that of any of his numerous predecessors. After a time the King appointed the Archbishop of Toulouse Chief of the Council of Finance, notwithstanding that he detested the man. In this choice the Queen, whose influence was usually sinister, also had a share. Brienne's one fixed ambition in life was fulfilled. Necker, still being in exile and busy writing pamphlets on finance, was not altogether forgotten at Court. He had a friend in Montmorin, the successor of Vergennes, who sang the good qualities of the Swiss financier to a lively tune. But the recall of Necker was not yet, for the clamour of the public in behalf of a favourite had not made itself sufficiently strident to pierce the dull pate of Louis XVI, who had indeed only just ordered that Necker should not set foot nearer than

twenty leagues of the Capital—sixteen leagues farther off than before. Pasquier, recently become a councillor of the *Parlement* of Paris, admits that "there was perhaps some good" in Calonne's plans, but the minister's "levity of mind was an obstacle to his taking such measures as were necessary for their adoption." He had not given sufficient attention to the composition of the Assembly of Notables, "and had, under a pressure which he knew not how to resist, suffered men most likely to raise troubles for him to enter it. It was in that assembly that M. de La Fayette made his début. The ground chosen by him was of a nature to conciliate public opinion. He prayed for the suppression of the *lettres de cachet* and of state prisons. A little later he supplemented this prayer with one that Protestants should have their civil status restored to them, and with another calling for the immediate convocation of the nation's representatives. As to M. de Calonne, his plans were not completely matured at the time of the opening of the Assembly. . . . This was known, and necessarily taken advantage of." Almost as ambitious as Talleyrand, whose assistance had been invoked at the eleventh hour by Calonne in drawing up the programme of the Assembly which had accomplished his ruin, Brienne now found himself in a decidedly awkward situation. If national bankruptcy were to be averted a loan was indispensable. An appreciation of the task undertaken by the man whom he had criticised with such damning effect—and some of whose plans he now saw fit to utilise—did not lighten the burden now shifted to his own shoulders. Perhaps he lacked either the heart or the pluck to throw over his friends; he certainly did not scruple to follow the policy which hitherto had been criticised by him. All his powers of persuasion, and they were not inconsiderable, failed to secure the acceptance

on the part of the Assembly of the land-tax and the stamp-tax. Brienne had no other alternative but to dissolve the Notables, after they had approved a loan of 60,000,000 *livres*, and the man who had "as weak a head as ever was covered by the peruque of a Councillor of State," to use the undoubtedly biassed expression of De Staël, who had both fought for and against privilege, was left to his own devices. The Revolution was drawing appreciably nearer. Calonne had stated that "the abuses offer a source of wealth which the State should appropriate, and which should serve to re-establish order in the finances." The abuses, according to his definition, included "those which weigh on the labouring classes, the pecuniary privileges, exceptions to the law which should be common to all, and many an unjust exemption which can only relieve certain taxpayers by embittering the conditions of others," and much more to the same effect. The Notables, far from assisting Calonne, went home full of "righteous" indignation against the treatment they had received, yet confident that the power of the King was on the wane. "From this time," says Professor Montague, "the deference for the Crown, formerly so profound in France, began to disappear. The King was still esteemed for his gentleness and good-will; but he was no longer thought competent to reform abuses. The Notables, by their manifest unwillingness to give up privilege in taxation, had also embittered the people against the First and Second Estates; and the belief became general that France must have a new constitution before the disorder of the finances could be redressed."[1]

[1] *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. viii. p. 105.

CHAPTER XII

QUEEN, CARDINAL, AND BAUBLE

"Perhaps the death of the Queen dates from that time."—NAPOLEON.

WHILE the citizens of Paris were enjoying *Le Mariage de Figaro* at the Comédie Française, and discussing public affairs at street corners and in the *salons* with an enthusiasm and vigour as never before, a grim tragedy was being enacted at the Court of Versailles. The majority of the actors in the drama are not inviting personalities, and the parts played by them would be sordid enough were it not for the weighty events which their calumny brought in its trail. The stage is occupied by perhaps a dozen persons, but the interest centres around two chief characters, a vain, ambitious man, and a reckless, pleasure-loving woman, the one holding the highest honour in the national Church of France, the other occupying a position second only to the King—to wit, Prince Louis de Rohan Soubise, Cardinal and Grand Almoner, and Marie Antoinette herself.

The story of the Diamond Necklace has been told many times, not always with a due regard for truth. The statement that Rohan as Ambassador at Vienna had met the Queen when she was an Archduchess of fourteen years of age is frequently repeated, whereas the Cardinal did not fill that post until 1772. The first occasion on which he saw her was at Mass in Strasburg Cathedral on the 7th May 1770, the day on which she left German soil for French territory. The myth regarding Rohan and

Vienna unquestionably originated in the *Mémoires* of Madame de la Motte, from the pages of which it was copied by many people who ought to have known better. For example, De Frénilly says that Rohan's "embassy in Vienna had resulted in Louis XVI's marriage. When Maria Theresa led him into the apartment of the four young Archduchesses with the words: 'Make your choice,' he chose Marie Antoinette." The Baroness de Courtot prefaces her version of the affair by saying that she "cannot vouch for the truth of it," and then proceeds to relate a highly-coloured story of the ambassador making love to the fair girl on his own account. "Be this as it may," she adds, "he actually did make the young Princess a violent declaration of love one day, when he was so unlucky as to be surprised by the Empress Maria Theresa, who, they say, hotly indignant at his unwarrantable boldness, heaped him with contumely and insisted on his immediate recall to Paris. It was this rejection which laid the foundation of his hatred against my poor unhappy Queen." There is a germ of truth in this characterisation of the Empress. She disliked the wearer of the scarlet robe, and it was on her suggestion that Marie Antoinette made it her duty to bring about Rohan's speedy return to France. Perhaps the fable was the offspring of a remark made by Maria Theresa to Madame Geoffrin during a visit of the latter to Vienna. "Ah! that is a child I should like to take with me to France," she exclaimed when Marie Antoinette was presented to her. "Tell your friends in France what you think of the little one," was the diplomatic reply of the far-seeing Empress.

All the incidents narrated by the Baroness de Courtot are not the results of an overstrung imagination, for she was in the Park of Versailles when one of the subsequent

acts was performed, and she also gave evidence at the trial of the foolish Cardinal.

Cardinal de Rohan was a man of fifty, cousin of Madame de Guémenée, one of the Queen's most intimate friends, fonder of women and ambition than of *Ave Marias* and *Pater nosters*, and by reason of his official connection with the Court a frequent visitor to Versailles. Although after-events proved him to be a particularly credulous individual, he was by no means a fool. As Prince-Bishop of Strasburg, Abbé of Saint Waast and other places, and in receipt of a bountiful income, he entertained with a magnificence entirely worthy, or perhaps unworthy, of his high position and of the proud old family whose name he bore. It is to be feared that his visitors were more often sinners than saints, thorough-paced representatives of the world, the flesh, and the devil. One of them was Joseph Balsamo, an infamous scoundrel who posed as Count Cagliostro, alias the Marquis of Pellegini. He was a charlatan with a persuasive personality and a touch of genius, an evil combination. Balsamo found clients sufficiently credulous to believe that in a pre-existence he had conversed with Christ in the city which welcomed Him with the waving of palms and then called for the release of Barabbas. In those intervals when the make-believe Count was not languishing in gaol he had ridden in a sumptuous coach attended by postilions, had distributed money to the poor thieved from the pockets of the rich, told fortunes, and performed miracles. It was through Cagliostro that Madame de la Motte, a descendant of an illegitimate son of Henry II, discovered the Cardinal's passionate love for Marie Antoinette and his hope of playing the part of Richelieu in politics. This particular character has also a criminal interest. As a girl in a poverty-stricken home she had

been fortunate enough to attract the attention of a lady of rank, who adopted and educated her. In due course, thanks to Madame, Comtesse de Provence, she succeeded in securing a pension of some fifty pounds a year from Louis XVI and then linked her life and her fortunes with a man entirely worthy of her, the Comte de la Motte, an impecunious aristocrat of Champagne. When she made the acquaintance of the Cardinal she at once referred to the Queen as her cousin, promised to use her influence with her royal relative in his behalf, and took good care to be seen at Versailles whenever the wearer of the red hat happened to be in the vicinity. This latter was not a difficult matter. Young, visiting the palace in 1787, remarks on the extraordinary people he met there. "In viewing the king's apartments," he writes, "which he had not left a quarter of an hour, with those slight traits of disorder that shewed he *lived* in it, it was amusing to see the blackguard figures that were walking uncontrouled about the palace, and even in his bed-chamber; men whose rags betrayed them to be in the last stage of poverty, and I was the only person that stared and wondered how the devil they got there. It is impossible not to like this careless indifference and freedom from suspicion. One loves the master of the house, who would not be hurt or offended at seeing his apartment thus occupied, if he returned suddenly; for if there was danger of this, the intrusion would be prevented. This is certainly a feature of that *good temper* which appears to me so visible every where in France."

With a woman's ready wit Madame de la Motte secured the services of a soldier named Rétaux de Villette to forge letters bearing Marie Antoinette's signature, and her husband then induced Nicole Le Quay, alias Oliva, who bore a striking resemblance to the Queen, to pose

as the consort of Louis XVI for the purpose of an interview with the Cardinal in the gardens surrounding Versailles. The ingenious ruse succeeded all too well.

"It was the 14th of July 1784," says the Baroness de Courtot, "and a marvellous summer evening; a well-nigh tropical atmosphere lay over the Park of Versailles and the Petit Trianon, where we had been taking tea in Her Majesty's apartments; and afterwards went out to breathe the freshness under the portico. Besides the Queen there was the Princess de Lamballe, Mesdemoiselles de Noailles, de Laval, and myself. The stars shone in dazzling brilliance, but in the bosquets and the broad avenues of the Park the shades of evening were already deep.

"Presently the Queen left us in order, as was her frequent custom, to take a little exercise before retiring. She strolled in the direction of one of the avenues, and we ladies remained beneath the portico while Mademoiselle de Laval went to fetch lights; the Queen allowing no lacqueys at the Trianon. We then seated ourselves round a table and chatted about the events of the day.

"Suddenly a shrill scream broke the stillness, and as we started up and ran in the direction from whence it came, the Queen rushed breathless towards us. When she came within the region of the light, we noticed that her beautiful face was ghastly pale and her eyes strangely fixed and glassy. My Princess asked in terrified solicitude if she felt ill, whereupon she replied, in a voice we hardly recognised, that she had just encountered an apparition. 'An apparition?' we cried. 'Yes, I can call it by no other name,' she gasped. 'A figure glided past me, so exactly resembling myself in every particular —even down to the dress I am wearing—that I could not but take it for my wraith. When, startled almost out of

my senses, I called to the apparition, it vanished among the trees.'"

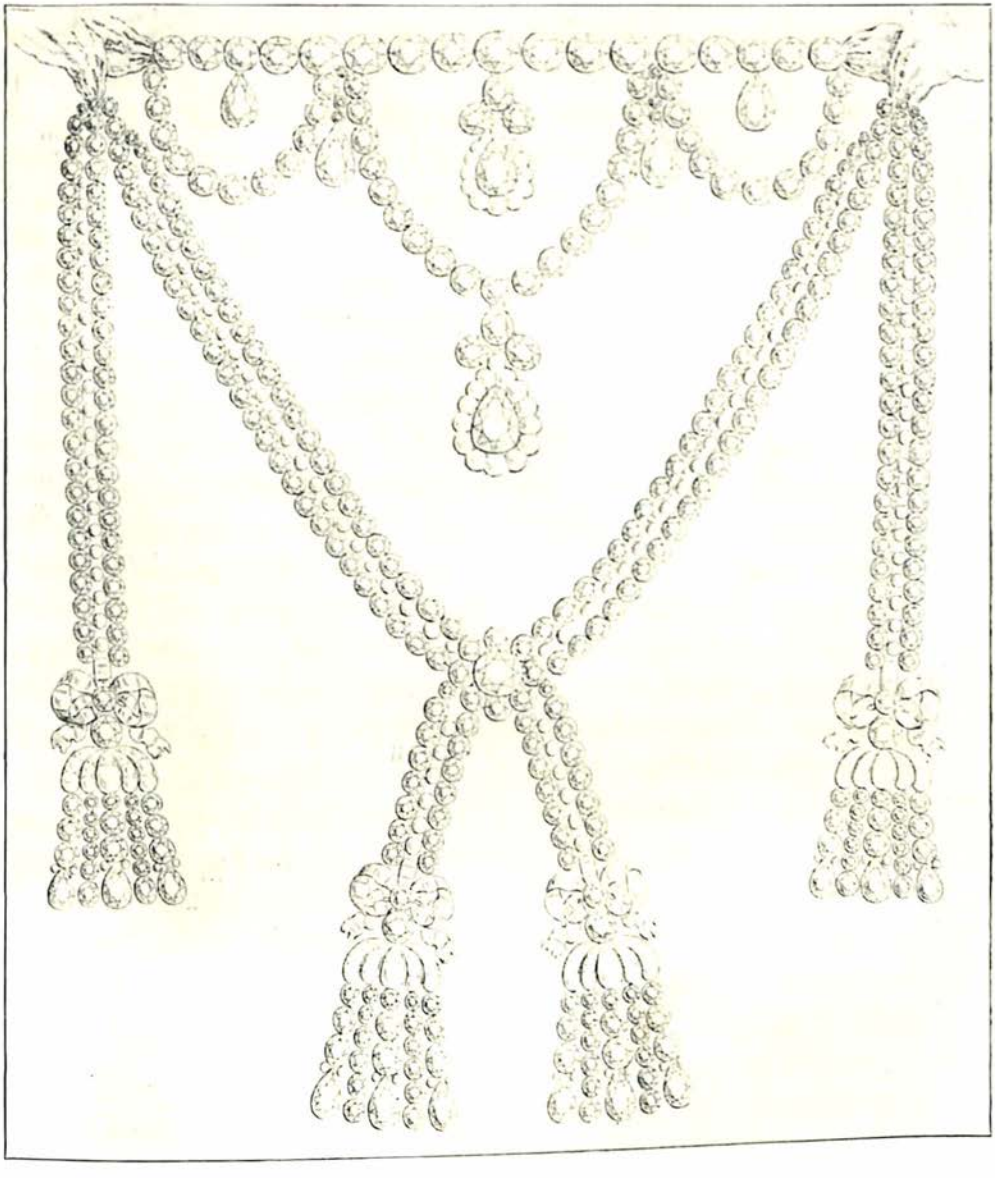
Like many another ghost of which we have heard, there was more flesh and blood than disembodied spirit about the spectre. It was poor foolish Nicole Le Quay posing as Marie Antoinette for the purpose of deceiving the Cardinal whom the real Queen had seen. Nicole played her part well when the infatuated representative of Mother Church appeared, dropped a rose, and whispered of a future appointment.

It is now that the "property" comes on the stage. Having handed to La Motte considerable sums of money for people whom the Queen wished to help, according to the letters which the Cardinal received bearing her Majesty's alleged signature, a note came to hand requesting him to act for her in the purchase of a certain beautiful necklace. Marie Antoinette did not wish the matter to reach the King's ears; it was therefore necessary that she should have an intermediary, with whom she would settle the bill in due course. The bauble in question weighed heavily on the hands of Bœhmer and Bassange, the jewellers of fashionable Paris. Already they had made attempts to sell it to "the Austrian." Hitherto she had resisted the temptation, which was assuredly subtle enough to such a lover of pretty things as Marie Antoinette. Negotiations were opened and concluded. Payment was to be made in instalments, the first to become due in six months. Rohan was something of a business man notwithstanding the comparatively easy way he had been duped. He therefore insisted that the Queen should first approve the purchase. Madame duly returned with a document bearing the single word *Bon* and the Queen's autograph. Then, and not till then, the necklace passed into the possession of

the Cardinal, who doubtless regarded Marie Antoinette's love as won and his ambition fulfilled. At Versailles he handed over the case containing it to Madame de la Motte, who in her turn gave it to her Majesty's messenger—Rétaux! Once secured, the gang broke up the necklace. Some of the gems were sent to Holland, then as now the centre of the diamond trade, La Motte's husband crossed the Channel to open negotiations for the sale of others in London, and a few were retained by the adventuress whose bold front had done so much to make the *coup* possible.

Madame's part in the odious business was not yet over. When the time arrived for the first instalment of the payment to be made a letter came to hand for the Cardinal begging him to use his utmost endeavours to secure a reduction in price and a postponement of the preliminary settlements. Rohan did his best to console the jewellers by a substantial solatium, but, being suspicious, they interrogated Madame de la Motte. She confessed that the signature *Marie Antoinette de France*, which had been shown to them by Rohan on the day the gems had passed out of their hands, was a forgery.

Bœhmer and Bassange acted instantly. The former presented himself to Madame Campan, reader to the late King's daughters, and was informed that the whole business was a fraud; the latter rushed off to the Cardinal to tell him of the swindle that had been perpetrated in his name, news which Rohan refused to believe. Some time before this the Queen had received from the jewellers, then anxious to push other wares, an enigmatic communication referring to the necklace which she did not understand, and probably did not attempt to, until Madame Campan broke the news to her. On this occasion her common sense—a rare enough commodity with her—came



THE DIAMOND NECKLACE

(*From an engraving of* 1786 *copied from the original necklace. This reduction is exactly one-third. From the Hennen Collection, by permission of the French Government*)

to the rescue, and she demanded a written statement of the transaction. When Marie Antoinette broke the news to Louis he determined on a public trial. It was doubtless very praiseworthy of him, very noble, and very heroic. Vergennes and the Austrian Ambassador, both more intimately acquainted with the ways of the world, did their best to persuade him against so public a course. Burning with righteous indignation the monarch pursued his own way, and was to regret it ever after. The result of the subsequent proceedings made the Queen more unpopular than ever, and set the tongues of gossips wagging with a further selection of lying calumnies.

On the 15th August 1785 the Cardinal, attired in full vestments, was ready to celebrate High Mass in the Chapel Royal at Versailles when he was informed that his Majesty required his presence. What his feelings must have been when the King exposed the stupid blunder of the forger in the signature *Marie Antoinette de France*, when "everybody knows that queens use only their baptismal names," is not difficult to imagine. No episcopal palace gave the Cardinal shelter that night. It was spent in the Bastille.

The trial took place before the *Parlement* of Paris, which again showed that it was not on the side of the Crown. A majority of five of the forty-nine judges who took part found Rohan not guilty, to the intense satisfaction of the mob, but he was banished to the Abbey of Chaise-Dieu, in Auvergne. La Motte was sentenced to be flogged, branded, and imprisoned for life, her husband condemned to a living death in the galleys, Rétaux to transportation, Nicole Le Quay, the fictitious Queen, was acquitted, and Cagliostro "discharged from the whole of the accusation."

"Yesterday morning early," writes Hailes on the 22nd

June 1786, "Mme. de la Motte was brought out of her prison into the great Court of the Palais, where she underwent the punishment of whipping and branding, according to the sentence of the Parliament. Her behaviour on this occasion was conformable to that shown on her trial. She used the most reproachful language against the Cardinal and her judges, and made so much resistance to the executioner that no less than four people were employed to hold her. Immediately after the infliction, which is more infamous than painful, Madame de la Motte was conveyed to the Salpetrière. The unprejudiced part of the public now begin to do justice to the conduct both of the Court and the Parliament in the whole affair of the Cardinal. The moderation of the former, it is allowed, reflects great honour on the Sovereign, and the impartial investigation and unbiassed decision of the latter will no doubt support the falling credit of French jurisprudence. The late condemnation of three innocent persons to the wheel by the Parliament of Paris had brought the criminal justice of the country into the greatest disrepute, and it has fixed an indelible stain on the character of that body."

The pity of it was that "the unprejudiced part of the public" was in the minority—it usually is—and Hailes says nothing of the Queen. If Rohan was innocent, then Marie Antoinette was guilty. Give a dog (or woman) a bad name——!

CHAPTER XIII

THE STRUGGLE WITH THE *PARLEMENTS*

"What is the Third Estate? Everything! What has it been hitherto in a political sense? Nothing! What does it ask? To be something!"—SIÉYÈS.

IN giving his consent to the assembly of the Council of Notables, Louis XVI had travelled far from the theory and practice of *le grand Monarque*, whose policy had been "*L'état, c'est moi.*" He admitted, if not in actual words, that the machine of which he was the axle had either worn out or was in urgent need of repairs, and that neither he nor his ministers were capable of dealing with the situation.

Brienne had now to face the *Parlement* of Paris. At first his task was made easy by the pacific attitude of its members. Edicts for free trade in corn, the creation of new provincial assemblies, and a money tax in place of the *corvée* were registered without trouble. This tranquil spirit encouraged the Minister to present edicts for levying a tax upon landed property and for a duty upon stamps. The calm was immediately succeeded by a storm. It is practically impossible to state with any exactness why these desirable reforms were refused. The defence of popular rights and liberties had been for long the creed of the *Parlement*, but it is well to notice that its resistance to the Crown usually appears to have been because the so-called "rights" of the privileged were in jeopardy. Mignet suggests that by vetoing these edicts a means of augmenting its power was afforded the *Parlement*; Smith asserts that "these reforms were

resisted solely because they were proposed by the Court and the Government. So long as they were combating the royal authority, the opposition leaders felt sure of popular sympathy and support, whatever might be the nature and real merits of the struggle." Professor Montague, a more recent authority, is content to put the opposition down to the fact that all new taxes were unpopular. Kitchen says that "the French people wanted far more than they would give," and "in this feverish and unwonted state of the public mind, the idea of a convocation of the States-General somehow came into being."

Hailes, shrewd, observant, and writing from the royalist point of view, saw in the action of the lawyers a deep-laid plot skilfully engineered. On the 16th August 1787, he writes to Carmarthen that "The Parliament of Paris, and indeed all the other Parliaments of the kingdom, continue to be animated by the same spirit of opposition to the measures of the Court that has manifested itself in so uncommon a degree ever since the dissolution of the Assembly of Notables. The protection of the people from an increase of taxes is the ground . . . that has been artfully chosen by the Parliament on which to rest their disobedience; but I have reason to think that the establishment of the Provincial Assemblies throughout the kingdom (a measure which could not be opposed by them in an open manner, on account of its extreme popularity) is the real, tho' concealed motive of their conduct. That innovation, which however it may be lightly treated with respect to its consequences to the Constitution of the French Monarchy by some individuals, seems, in general, to be allowed to be a change of great prospective importance. But if, as it is imagined, these establishments should in future conduce to the

LOUIS XVI ABOUT 1785

This portrait by Collet (in Kensington Palace) makes a dramatic contrast with that given on the plate facing page 408, painted a few days before Louis' execution.

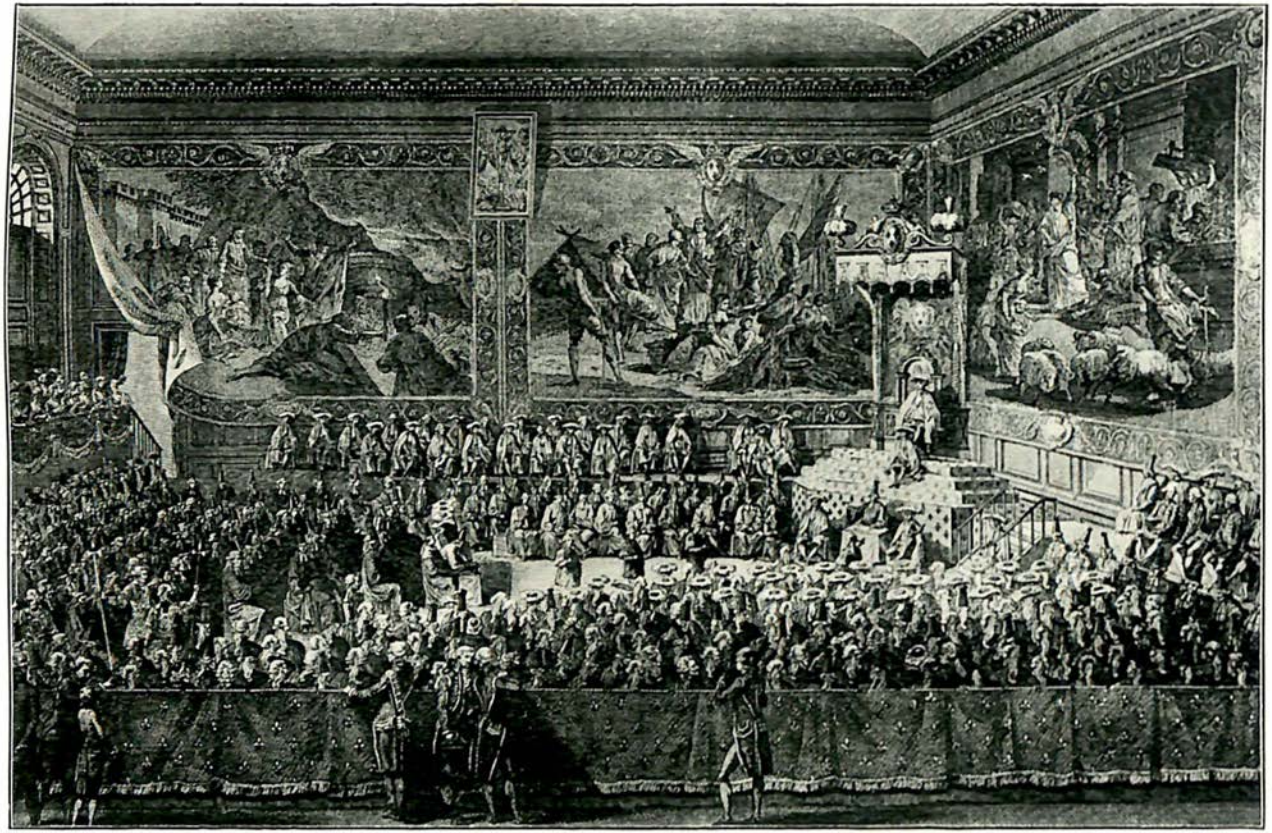
limitation of the authority of the Sovereign, there can be no doubt but that they will affect in a more near and more immediate manner the consideration of those Courts whose existence is almost coeval with the monarchy itself. The Provincial Assemblies becoming hereafter the judges and regulators of every part of the administration that immediately affects the people, and of which they are to form so considerable a part, nothing can in future be effectually opposed by the Parliaments, as their sanction can never be withheld from such measures as may already have been adopted and agreed to by the nation at large.

"The present struggle may therefore, I apprehend, be regarded as the last gasp of the Sovereign Courts consider'd in the light of checks upon the power of the Crown, should the States General, so loudly called for by them, not be convened; and there will remain, of course, nothing of their so long maintained consideration with the public, but the simple formality of registration and the ordinary dispensation of justice. In such a state of their affairs, Your Lordship will not be surprised to learn that their protest against their own constrained Act at the Lit de Justice should have been followed by a formal interdiction of the printing and distribution of the Declaration of the Stamp Duty, and the Edict for the Land Tax. . . ."[1]

Public opinion in the middle class unhesitatingly supported the *Parlement*. The Abbé Sabathier, a member of that body, called for the States-General in a witty remark that was repeated throughout Paris: "It is not *états de finance* that we want, it is *États généraux*." His colleagues declared the latter institution to be the only one with power to authorise a permanent tax, and passed a resolution to that effect. In due course the edicts were

[1] *Despatches from Paris*, 1784–1790, pp. 231–2.

registered by a bed of justice, as mentioned in the above despatch. This despotic proceeding at Versailles, at which Monsieur and the Comte d'Artois, the King's younger brother, were present, was as oil on flames to the magistrates, who vehemently declared the registration illegal. The populace tried to fight their way into the court, and cheered the black robes on their return to the city until they were hoarse. Copies of the edicts and registration were burnt in front of the palace. Louis retorted by doubling the patrols, suppressing many of the political clubs, and exiling the *Parlement* to Troyes. An attempt was then made by the magistrates to secure the arrest of Calonne for fraud in connection with the finances, a proceeding which must have made a number of other individuals quake in their shoes. The ex-Minister, evidently thinking discretion the better part of valour, and distance of more importance than either in sudden emergency, sought refuge in England, as thousands of *émigrés* were to do a few years later. Reform was in the air. Riots in the capital and the provinces, and protests from the different *Parlements* against the exiling of the magistrates of Paris attested the fact in no uncertain way. Many printed copies of the letter were seized by the police to prevent their getting into the hands of the people, but nothing could arrest the desire for a political reformation. The Archbishop still retained the confidence of Louis, and with a magnificent belief in the great abilities of his family, secured the appointment of the Comte de Brienne, hitherto in command at Bordeaux, to the Ministry of War. This post had been vacated by Ségur because he was unable to obtain support for his projected measures in the matter of Holland, where civil war was rife. As a consequence the republican party, which it was the



"Bed of Justice" held at Versailles, August 6, 1787, to Register the Edicts for Calonne's Taxes, which the Parlement had resisted

(*Drawn and etched by Girardet. Given by special permission of the French Government*)

policy of France to support, was shattered by a Prussian army marching into the country and securing the power for William V, Prince of Orange.

Meanwhile justice was suspended, finances were running low, and the people were ranged on the side of the exiled *Parlement.* It became increasingly necessary for some kind of compromise to be arranged if the deadlock were not to endure for ever. This was brought about by the withdrawing of the provoking edicts on the one part, and by the promise to register an edict prolonging for five years an existing tax known as the *deuxième vingtième* on the other; "an incomplete victory," as Hailes terms it. A royal session of the *Parlement*, little less arbitrary than a *lit de justice*, was therefore held for registering a new loan of 420,000,000 *livres*, spread over five years, and an edict for the restoration of the civil status to Protestants, for which Malesherbes was mainly responsible. The King promised to convoke the States-General in 1791. During the debate that followed, the Duke of Orleans, cousin of the King and formerly Duc de Chartres, Fréteau de St. Just, and Sabathier raised opposition. This gave Louis considerable umbrage, and as a sequel the Duke was banished to his château at Villers-Cotterets, and the others were imprisoned. As the *Parlement* continued to resist, and petitioned the King for the reinstatement of Orleans and the two magistrates, a *cour plénière*, composed of people of rank chosen by the Crown, was suggested for the special purpose of registering royal edicts, thus abrogating the jealously-guarded prerogative of the "long robes" and their right to protest. The plot was discovered by d'Espréménil, who disclosed the intention of the Court to his colleagues. The *Parlement* of Paris issued a counter-stroke by declaring that it was the right of the nation to grant

subsidies through the States-General, that the provincial courts could not order the registry of the King's edicts unless they were in conformity with the constitutional laws of the province they represented and the fundamental laws of the State, and that citizens could not be arrested by *lettres de cachet*, which secured arrest and imprisonment without trial.

It was determined that d'Espréménil and Goislard, another of the spokesmen of the Opposition, should be seized without delay. Troops were sent to carry out the order. "Where are Monsieurs d'Espréménil and Goislard?" asked the commanding officer in peremptory tones, as he entered the hall. "We are all d'Espréménils and Goislards: since you do not know them, take us all!" yelled the magistrates. On the following day the two men surrendered.

The new Provincial Assemblies, on which the public had set much store, proved of some value, but as all the original members were nominated by the King, they were suspect. Many of the provincial *Parlements* followed that of Paris, and flatly refused the duty of registration. Busy pens and busier presses poured out pamphlets against privilege and despotism as never before. Louis promised reforms in abundance to his indignant subjects, and although they were urgently wanted and altogether desirable, there was no confidence in the source from whence they emanated. Recourse was had to the clergy, who promptly refused any increase in their voluntary grant, and joined in the cry for the States-General. At last the Archbishop of Toulouse deigned to listen to the popular clamour. "Are you not afraid to hold the States?" he was asked. "Sully held them," was his reply. Could egotism go further?

Let us turn from the turmoil of Court and *Parlement*,

leaving them to get more and more involved, to glance at the condition of affairs in the country as seen through the eyes of the illustrious Arthur Young, who in 1788 made one of his several tours of France. In August he he was at Rouen. The Parliament-house was shut up on account of its members having been exiled to their country-seats because of their refusal to register the edicts. Young found Louis XVI "more popular than the Parliament," to whom the people "attribute the general dearness of everything." At Rennes the *Parlement* was also in exile. Troops were quartered near the city gates for the purpose of keeping the peace. The traveller tells us that one-third of the land he had seen in Brittany "seems uncultivated, and nearly all of it is in misery." In a sudden burst of feeling, he adds: "What have kings, and ministers, and parliaments, and states, to answer for their prejudices, seeing millions of hands that would be industrious, idle and starving, through the execrable maxims of despotism, or the equally detestable prejudices of a feudal nobility." Brittany seemed to him to have "nothing in it but privileges and poverty." In the Côtes du Nord the habitations of the poor were "miserable heaps of dirt; no glass, and scarcely any light; but they have earth chimneys." At Landivisiau (Finistère), "the women furrowed without age by labour, to the utter extinction of all softness of sex." Arriving at "the great commercial city of Nantes" on a Sunday, he finds the magnificent new theatre full. "'*Mon Dieu!*' cried I to myself, 'do all the wastes, the deserts, the heath, ling, furze, broom, and bog, that I have passed for 300 miles lead to this spectacle? What a miracle, that all this splendour and wealth of the cities in France should be so unconnected with the country! There are no gentle transitions from ease to comfort, from comfort to wealth:

you pass at once from beggary to profusion.' . . . Nantes is as *enflammé* in the cause of liberty as any town in France can be; the conversations I witnessed here prove how great a change is effected in the minds of the French; nor do I believe it will be possible for the present Government to last half a century longer, unless the cleverest and most decided talents are at the helm. The American revolution has laid the foundation of another in France, if government does not take care of itself."

At Toulouse the mob built barricades of paving-stones with the object of resisting the entry of the commissioners; at Bordeaux the proclamation of the new laws was read amidst intense excitement and under the protection of bayonets; the *Parlement* of Dauphiné declared itself permanent until the edicts were withdrawn, and passed various liberal resolutions regarding the estates of the province, and the city of Grenoble, where the *Parlement* usually met, was placed in a state of defence. "In vain," says Pasquier, "did the King's commissioners and the military commanders make a display in the provinces of all the powers placed at their disposal; in vain did *lettres de cachet* rain upon the most recalcitrant; resistance went on increasing from all quarters. In order to restore peace to the public mind, the only resource left to the Government was to renew its pledge to call together the so ardently prayed-for States-General."

A valuable contemporary view of affairs at the capital is afforded us in a letter written in the early days of 1789 by Gouverneur Morris to the Marquis de Moustier, the official representative of France in America. "Your nation," he says, "is now in a most important crisis, and the question, Shall we have a *constitution*, or shall *will* continue to be law? employs every mind and agitates every heart in France. Even voluptuousness itself arises

from its couch of roses and looks anxiously abroad at the busy scene to which nothing can now be indifferent. Your nobles, your clergy, your people, are all in motion for the elections. A spirit which has lain dormant for generations starts up and stares about, ignorant of the means of obtaining, but ardently desirous to possess the object, consequently active, energetic, easily led, but, alas, easily, too easily, misled. Such is the instinctive love of freedom which now boils in the bosom of your country, that respect for his sovereign, which forms the distinctive mark of a Frenchman, stimulates and fortifies on the present occasion those sentiments which have hitherto been deemed most hostile to monarchy. For Louis the Sixteenth has himself proclaimed from the throne, a wish that every barrier should be thrown down which time or accident may have opposed to the general felicity of his people. It would be presumptuous in me even to guess at the effect of such causes, operating on materials and institutions of which I confess to you the most profound ignorance.

"I feel that I have already gone too far in attempting to describe what I think I have perceived. But before I quit the subject I must express the wish, the ardent wish, that this great ferment may terminate not only to the good but to the glory of France. On the scenes which her great theatre now displays, the eyes of the universe are fixed with anxiety. The national honour is deeply interested in a successful issue. Indulge me also, I pray, in conveying the opinion that until that issue is known, every arrangement both foreign and domestic must feel a panic. Horace tells us that in crossing the sea we change our climate, not our souls. I can say what he could not; that I find on this side the Atlantic a strong resemblance to what I left on the other—a nation

which exists in hopes, prospects, and expectations—the reverence for ancient establishments gone, existing forms shaken to the foundation, and a new order of things about to take place, in which, perhaps even to the very names, all former institutions will be disregarded.

"To judge of the present turmoil I can give you no better standard than by telling you, what is seriously true, that when I took up the pen it was to give you news of your friends, and to describe the impression made on my mind by the objects which necessarily present themselves in this great capital, I will not say of France, but of Europe. And have I done it? Yes; for the one great object in which all are engaged has swallowed up, like the rod of Aaron in Egypt, every other enchantment by which France was fascinated."

At last Brienne, unable to resist public opinion any longer, forced to issue paper money because of an exhausted treasury, scoffed at by the people and beloved of the King, advised Louis to offer no further resistance to the almost united wish of the nation. The States-General must be summoned. They should assemble on May-day of the following year. The official announcement to that effect was made on the 8th August 1788. On the 25th inst. the Minister resigned.

The last meeting of the States had taken place in 1614, nearly two centuries before. No living person could remember it, few had anything but the most fragmentary knowledge of its constitution, consequently there was a great ransacking of cupboards and garrets for documents likely to be of service. Precedent must be followed, even though it was the besetting sin of the age. Municipal officers and learned bodies were called upon to hunt through their archives for useful particulars, and

independent investigations were welcomed. Incidentally the appeal helped to keep the people quiet.

That the *États Généraux* were composed of deputies representing the three orders of the people—namely the clergy, the nobility, and the *Tiers État*—and that they had been summoned when the monarch required money or support, was generally known. There information began and ended. Probably very few were aware that it was not until the accession of the Carlovingian kings that the clergy had been allowed to take part in the assemblies, and that the commons owed their introduction to the good graces of Philippe-le-Bel in the first decade of the fourteenth century. It was for historians and other dry-as-dust delvers into the secrets of the past to appreciate such facts. The *savants* also ascertained that there was no recognised place of meeting, no abiding rule as to the number of deputies, no settled conviction as to the form of election, very little indeed on which to build.

In the fourteenth century the States were held, in all probability, once a year, occasionally twice, according to the urgency of affairs and the necessity for subsidies. As the monarchy grew stronger and more despotic the meetings became less frequent, so that after 1614 they ceased, although petitions had been presented praying that they might be convened. They had, however, tried to establish a few principles, one of which was that new taxes could not be imposed without their consent.

Even the weather seemed to be on the side of reform. A prolonged drought made the summer of 1788 memorable; the violent hailstorm which concluded it did extensive damage, and the winter that followed was extremely severe. These abnormal climatic conditions almost goaded the people to madness. They were face

to face with famine; the State was face to face with ruin. The two combined formed practically the sole topic of conversation. When Brienne offered liberty of the Press, so far as regarded the States-General, he opened the floodgates of a literary deluge. No fewer than 2700 pamphlets appeared. Many of these were indifferent, a few useful, but all must have had some kind of effect, even allowing that only a very small percentage of readers assimilated their teaching. That of the Abbé Siéyès, Vicar-General at Chartres, had an enormous vogue. It was entitled *Qu'est-ce-que le Tiers État?*[1] and openly advocated that at the National Council the Third Estate should have twice as many representatives as the privileged classes, whereas on the previous occasion clergy, nobility, and Commons had sent an equal number of deputies. They had not sat together, and a single vote was cast for the whole order after an agreement had been arrived at. If reform were really desired, the point argued with so much force by Siéyès seemed absolutely essential, for the simple obvious reason that the clergy and nobility were scarcely likely to deprive themselves of their privileges. There were plenty of patriots amongst them, but "not enough to go round" in respect of securing a majority for reform. Deliberation in common and individual voting were insisted upon by the Abbé.

In August 1788 Louis wisely "dropped the pilot," now one of the most unpopular men in Paris, if not in the whole of France, and recalled Necker, thereby proving the correctness of the forecast of the Duke of Dorset, who had written fifteen months before: "Monsr. Neckar (*sic*) has many powerful friends, and the time may come when he may be call'd upon by the general voice of the Nation to take again the direction of the Finances."

[1] *What is the Third Estate?*

His resumption of office restored confidence in the funds, and at his request the *Parlements* were reinstated. In November 1788, after the edict convoking the States had been registered on the understanding that the orders should vote separately, the Minister called together the Notables for the purpose of discussing the make-up of the forthcoming assembly. They decided that the Commons should not have representatives equal in number to those of the two other orders combined; but they negatived the proposition that the possession of landed property should be an indispensable qualification, and declared that henceforth there should be no exemptions from the payment of taxes. Necker thought it well to overrule the first decision. A council at Versailles, at which Marie Antoinette was present, concurred. The solution of the problem of the mode of voting was indefinitely postponed. That, after all, was the crucial point, for if the voting of the three Estates was to be by Orders and taken separately, the nobility and clergy need fear nothing; if they were to vote together and according to the decision of the majority there were sufficient reformers in the first two Estates, especially of the clergy, to sway the balance in favour of the Commons. Necker had a good heart, as was proved by the magnificent way he came to the rescue of the starving in Paris during the winter of 1788–9, but he had no head for statesmanship. Instead of guiding public opinion, he was led by it.

Mallet du Pan, whom Lord Acton terms "the most sagacious of all the politicians who watched the course of the Revolution," and "a liberal, independent, and discerning observer," notes in November 1788 that "there are no two schemes, ideas, or proposals alike: assemblies are held in the provinces with or without orders, or contrary to orders. Every brain is heated. We have reason-

ings and counter-reasonings; and instead of showing the different orders in the States how their interests agree, men are only occupied in showing them the contrary, in setting them against each other, and in creating a schism between the *Tiers État* and the other two orders. They have succeeded. The excess of the abuse of power has brought on an acute crisis, and this crisis will produce no good, owing to the extravagance of what is required and demanded. France is on the eve of seeing the times of Henry III renewed, where the King had to combat one half of the nation with the other."

CHAPTER XIV

THE MEETING OF THE STATES-GENERAL

"Knowing that the happiness of our people depends principally on a wise administration of the finances, we shall turn our attention to them above all else." FIRST EDICT OF LOUIS XVI.

THE *Parlement* of Paris, which had seen fit to state that "only the nation assembled in the Estates-General can give the consent necessary to the establishment of a permanent tax," at length withdrew its objection to the double representation of the Third Estate. This concession was not made because it was anxious in behalf of the majority of the nation, but because it was speedily losing ground in the sympathies of the people, sympathies be it added which were never recovered. Arrangements for the great event proceeded apace. In accordance with ancient custom *cahiers,* or list of grievances and suggestions for reform, were drawn up for each representative, to be presented to the King at the meeting of the States-General. They revealed the intensely vital fact that reform would be welcomed not only by the Commons but also by many of the nobles, and perhaps fifty per cent. of the clergy. Equal taxation, liberty of person and of the Press, the extinction of *lettres de cachet,* the control of the public purse by the people's representatives, the redemption of feudal dues—all these and many other points of paramount importance were raised.

A typical *cahier,* almost touching in its simplicity and quaint phraseology, is that drawn up by the peasantry of Paroisse de Pas-Saint-Lomer. It runs as follows:

"The inhabitants of this parish have no other complaints to make than those which are common to folk of their rank and condition, namely that they pay too many taxes of different kinds already; that they would wish that the disorder of the finances might not be the cause of new burdens upon them, because they were not able to bear any more, having a great deal of trouble to pay those which are now levied, but that it much rather belonged to those who are rich to contribute towards setting up the affairs of the kingdom.

"As for remonstrances, they have no wishes nor other desires than peace and public tranquillity; that they wish the assembly of the Estates-General may restore the order of the finances, and bring about in France the order and prosperity of the State; that they are not skilful enough about the matters which are to be treated in the said assembly to give their opinion, and they trust to the intelligence and good intentions of those who will be sent there as deputies.

"Finally, that they know no means of providing for the necessities of the State but a great economy in expenses and reciprocal love between the King and his subjects."

It must be remembered, for the fact is often overlooked, that at this stage there was no talk of a republic. The nation sought the right, through an assembly, to take part in the business which directly affected it. The Ministers, under the control of Louis, would carry out the wishes of the legislature. The vital question of the moment was, Would the three Orders succeed in adjusting their somewhat varied interests for the benefit of all?

The busy pens of pamphleteers grew busier. Periodicals such as Jean Paul Marat's *L'Ami du Peuple*, founded in 1788 as *Le Publiciste Parisien*, expounded revolutionary socialism. Clubs for the discussion of needed reforms

sprung up almost with the rapidity of mushrooms. Some of them, like the Cordeliers' of Paris, had their foundation in the bringing together of the voters of the various districts, who established themselves as a permanent institution. This movement in the capital of France gave a rough organisation to Paris which was to prove of value in the July of 1789. The gardens of the Palais-Royal sheltered the more dissolute politicians and agitators, and eventually became the head-quarters of violent revolutionaries of the lowest type. Within the memory of many men living at the time of the calling of the States-General its ornamental flower-beds and avenue of chestnut trees had been the pride of Paris. It was the most fashionable of fashionable resorts, where the aristocracy took the air and discussed the Opéra. In 1788 the garden remained, but the chestnuts and the blue-blooded folk who walked beneath them had disappeared, to give place to shops and demagogues. It speedily became the Hyde Park and Trafalgar Square of the capital. To the west stood the palace erected by Richelieu, and now the resort of the malcontent and the seditious. What the Cardinal had sought to build its present owner hoped to destroy, for the intention of the Duke of Orleans was to supplant Louis on the throne of France. There was money in plenty for those willing to assist him—the ne'er-do-wells, the criminals, the famished, the agitators by choice as well as by instinct—"the lees of the people," as Scott calls them. Every riot was not the work of Orleans or his agents, but many of the popular movements emanated from the palace, the garden, or the cafés. At the Palais Royal political clubs, public gambling-houses, firebrands and prostitutes flourished like green bay trees.

Thousands of peasants, driven by distress from the [illegible], turned their shambling footsteps towards the city

by the Seine as hungry wolves to a carcass. Relief works were opened for them, a policy which drew still more in the direction of Paris. Everything was tending towards a revolution, but perhaps few people realised it. Certainly the King did not.

The Edict for the assembling of the States-General is an interesting document, and runs as follows:

"We have need of the concourse of our faithful subjects to aid us in surmounting the difficulties arising from the state of the finances, and establishing, in conformity with our most ardent desire, a durable order in the departments of Government which affect the public welfare. We wish that the three Estates shall confer together on the matters which will be submitted to their examination; they will make known to us the wishes and grievances of the people in such a way that by mutual confidence and exchange of kind offices between the King and people the public evils shall as rapidly as possible be remedied. For this purpose we enjoin and command that immediately on the receipt of this letter you proceed to elect deputies of the three Orders, worthy of confidence from their virtues and the spirit with which they are animated; that the deputies shall be furnished with powers and instructions sufficient to enable them to attend to all concerns of the State, and introduce such remedies as shall be deemed advisable for the reform of abuses, and the establishment of a fixed and durable order in all parts of the Government worthy of the paternal affections of the King and of the resolutions of so noble an assembly."

Louis apparently acted in all good faith when he issued the order that every man whose name appeared upon the list of taxpayers was entitled to vote for the election of deputies of the Third Estate, but the

THE PROMENADE IN THE GARDEN OF THE PALAIS ROYAL IN ITS FASHIONABLE DAYS

(From a finely coloured aquatint of 1787 in the Hennin Collection. Given by special permission of the French Government)

precedent of 1614 was not lost sight of for one moment. He was not for allowing the monarchy to pass out of his hands, nor were the people disposed to do anything but have a voice in their own affairs. The curés, loathing the archbishops, bishops, and abbots who waxed fat at Versailles, elected men of their own rank to the extent of two-thirds of their representatives. Practically universal manhood suffrage was allowed in the Third Estate, provided taxes were paid, but the elections were indirect, and often took place amid great excitement. In small towns and country parishes one elector, in large towns two electors, for every hundred voters was chosen by them to act in the selection of deputies, each *bailliage*, into which France was divided, sending one cleric, one noble, and two members of the Commons to the States. Any beneficed clergyman, and every noble holding a *fief* was an elector for his Order. The following list of deputies will give some idea of the composition of the States-General of 1789:—Clergy: Archbishops, 11; bishops, 33; vicars, 188; canons, abbots, priors, rectors, 76. Total, 308. Nobility (not including that of Brittany): Princes and dukes, 21; counts, 78; marquesses, 73; viscounts, 16; barons, 29; gentlemen, magistrates, &c., 68. Total, 285. Commoners: Magistrates, 106; advocates, 191; physicians, 15; merchants, 61; landed proprietors, &c. 244; literary men, 4. Total, 621. Total number of deputies, 1214.

In a letter of considerable interest, Gouverneur Morris tells Washington, on the 29th April 1789, that "The elections are finished throughout this kingdom, except in the capital, and it appears from the instructions given to the representatives (called here *les cahiers*) that certain points are universally demanded, which when granted and secured will render France perfectly free as to the

principles of the constitution—I say principles, for one generation at least will be required to render the practice familiar. We have, I think, every reason to wish that the patriots may be successful. The generous wish which a free people must form to disseminate freedom, the grateful emotion which rejoices in the happiness of a benefactor, and a strong personal interest as well in the liberty as in the power of this country, all conspire to make us far from indifferent spectators. I say that we have an *interest* in the *liberty* of France. The leaders here are our friends; many of them have imbibed their principles in America, and all have been fired by our example. Their opponents are by no means rejoiced at the success of our Revolution, and many of them are disposed to form connections of the strictest kind with Great Britain. The commercial treaty emanated from such dispositions, and, according to the usual course of those events which are shaped by human wisdom, it will probably produce the exact reverse of what was intended by the projectors. The spirit of this nation is at present high, and M. Necker is very popular, but if he continues long in administration it will be somewhat wonderful. His enemies are numerous, able, and inveterate. His supporters are uncertain as to his fate, and will protect him no longer than while he can aid in establishing a constitution. But when once that great business is accomplished he will be left to stand on his own guard. The Court wish to get rid of him, and unless he shows very strong in the States-General they will gratify their wishes. His ability as a minister will be much contested in that assembly, but with what success time only can determine.

"The materials for a revolution in this country are very indifferent. Everybody agrees that there is an utter

prostration of morals—but this general position can never convey to the American mind the degree of depravity. It is not by any figure of rhetoric, or force of language, that the idea can be communicated. An hundred anecdotes and an hundred thousand examples are required to show the extreme rottenness of every member. There are men and women who are greatly and eminently virtuous. I have the pleasure to number many in my own acquaintance, but they stand forward from a background deeply and darkly shaded. It is, however, from such crumbling matter that the great edifice of freedom is to be erected here. Perhaps, like the stratum of rock which is spread under the whole surface of their country, it may harden when exposed to the air, but it seems quite as likely that it will fall and crush the builders. I own to you that I am not without such apprehensions, for there is one fatal principle which pervades all ranks. It is a perfect indifference to the violation of all engagements. Inconstancy is so mingled in the blood, marrow, and every essence of this people, that when a man of high rank and importance laughs to-day at what he seriously asserted yesterday, it is considered as in the natural order of things. Consistency is the phenomenon. Judge then what would be the value of an association should such a thing be proposed, and even adopted. The great mass of the people have no religion but their priests, no law but their superiors, no morals but their interest. These are the creatures who, led by drunken curates, are now in the high road *à la Liberté*, and the first use they make of it is to form insurrections everywhere for the want of bread. We have had a little riot here yesterday and the day before, and I am told that some men have been killed, but the affair was so distant from the quarter in which I reside that I know nothing of the particulars."

The "little riot" mentioned by Gouverneur Morris is called by Dorset "a very serious tumult." It took place on the 27th and 28th April, was the first popular rising in Paris, the preliminary flutter of the straw which showed which way the wind was blowing, and it is significant that it took place at the time of the elections. M. Réveillon, a wealthy Paris elector whose chief claim to fame is in having introduced patterned wall-papers into France, owned a paper-mill employing several hundred hands in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. It was commonly reported that he had not only stated that fifteen *sous* a day was a living wage, but that he contemplated a reduction at his establishment. The mob, armed with sticks, stones, and other weapons, first burnt his effigy and then pillaged both his house and the mill, completing their fell work by setting fire to them. They then turned their attention to the house of M. Henriot, a manufacturer of saltpetre, which they treated in a similar manner. Pasquier, who saw the affair at close range, says that it came as a surprise to Parisian Society, whose members had gone to the Bois de Vincennes to witness the races. He is probably correct in his assumption that the uprising was an artificial one; "the poor wretches who took part in it knew neither what they wanted nor what they did, and it was clear that their fury was of the manufactured-to-order kind." It was stated that those who were killed were well supplied with money, but whether the largesse was distributed by the Court Party in an attempt to make Louis disgusted with the populace and thus retard reform, or by the hirelings of the Duke of Orleans, who wished to set Paris aflame for the purpose of overturning the throne, is one of the uncertainties of history. "You would hardly believe how little it cost the Duke of

Orleans to excite that tumult at Réveillon's," says Champfort. The latter contention is supported to a certain extent by the English ambassador. "No other motive than the dearness of bread," he writes, "has been assigned by the unhappy wretches who were engaged in these excesses, most of whom were intoxicated to a very great degree; though some are disposed to suspect that the friends and supporters of the Parliament have secretly fomented the disturbance."

In at least one important particular Pasquier is most certainly wrong. He says that two or three companies of the Swiss Guards and of the *Gardes Françaises* marched against the Faubourg with cannon and soon quelled the disturbance, and that the display had a great effect. "It has been seen," he writes, "that the *Gardes Françaises* were still to be depended upon, but the sight of their loyalty became a warning to the party which was working to bring about the Revolution. It saw that the time had come to begin tampering with the spirit of that body. . . ." The truth is that the Swiss Guards performed the major part of the unpleasant work of firing on the people. The *Gardes Françaises* showed their sympathy with the mob by carrying out their orders in an extremely perfunctory manner. Several people were either killed or wounded during the four hours' fighting, two of the rioters were caught red-handed when engaged in pillaging and hanged, and a number of prisoners were thrown into gaol. The affair was never investigated officially, and those who had the misfortune to spend a few days in durance vile were liberated, doubtless to carry on their nefarious practices when opportunity permitted, which soon became increasingly frequent.

Louis received the deputies at Versailles on the 2nd May 1789. Although the whole ceremony was carried

out according to precedent, which augured ill for any departure from it when the States were in session, the distinction made between the three Orders was particularly noticeable. While the representatives of privilege had no cause for complaint, the marked contrast between the three classes was not lost on those who stood for the people. An hour before noon the clergy assembled, followed two hours later by the nobles, each being admitted to the King's private *cabinet*. It was not until four o'clock that the black-robed Commons found themselves in the *chambre de parade*, from the balcony of which the monarch had addressed a hungry mob exactly fourteen years before, but they got no further. There they were presented to Louis, after being duly arrayed in the order of their *bailliages* by the Grand Master of Ceremonies. The whole business savoured of the sorting out of his pupils by a schoolmaster before entering the presence of a distinguished visitor. Whatever geniality was lacking on the part of the "father of his people" was amply atoned by the cordial reception of the crowd which pressed in.[1]

On the 4th—the intervening day was a Sunday—King, Court, and the three Estates attended a solemn service in the church of St. Louis, marching there in procession from Notre Dame de Versailles, a distance of less than half a mile. Many descriptions of the scene have been left to us, but none is more graphic than that of the Marquis de Ferrières.

"I recall with pleasure," he writes, "the impression which this august and touching ceremony made upon me. . . . The nobility were dressed in black coats, waistcoats, and breeches, richly embroidered with gold, silk

[1] *From the Monarchy to the Republic in France.* By Sophia H. MacLehose (Glasgow, 1904), pp. 55–6.

coats, lace cravats, and hats mounted with feathers *à la* Henry IV; the clergy in gowns, large mantles, and cornered hats; the bishops in their purpled robes and surplices; and the Third Estate in black suits, with silk cloaks and cambric cravats. The King was seated in a vehicle in the form of an alcove, richly decorated; Monsieur, the Comte d'Artois, the princes, the ministers, and the chief officers of the crown, took their place beneath the Queen opposite; and Madame the Comtesse d'Artois, the princesses, and the ladies of the Court, gaily attired, and sparkling with diamonds, formed his brilliant suite. The streets were hung with tapestry; the regiments of the French and Swiss Guards formed a line from Notre Dame to Saint Louis; immense crowds observed the procession in respectful silence; the balconies were ornamented with the most expensive drapery, the windows filled with spectators of every age and both sexes, particularly with beautiful women, elegantly dressed: every variety of hats, feathers, and apparel was displayed on this occasion; a most amiable emotion was painted on every countenance, and joy sparkled in all eyes. Clapping of hands and expressions of the most cordial interest welcomed us, and followed us after we were out of sight. How vainly do I endeavour to describe this ravishing and enchanting scene. Bands of music, placed at convenient distances, filled the air with melodious sounds; and military marches, the beat of drums, the flourishing of trumpets, and the noble chant of the priests, alternately succeeding each other with discord or confusion, animated this triumphant procession."

From a window Madame de Staël, chatting in her vivacious way with the wife of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, watched the gorgeous procession as it slowly wended its way along the Rue Dauphine, across the

Place d'Armes, and down the Rue Saborg to hear mass, the mere mention of which religious ceremony was to call forth ridicule in a few short months. The younger woman, who inherited or inculcated Necker's predilection for liberal measures and was less diplomatic in revealing her feelings, enthused at the sight. "You are wrong to rejoice," said Madame de Montmorin, viewing from quite another mental point of view, "this event forebodes much misery to France and to ourselves." One other spectator is worthy of mention, although the interest is more pathetic and sentimental than historical. A little lad of seven and a half years, propped up by pillows so that he might see his father and mother pass, bent his head and peered from the balcony of the Petite Ecurie. It was the Dauphin, already marked by Death.

Within the magnificent church there was a slight difference of opinion between the Grand Master of Ceremonies and M. de Larévellière-Lépeaux, a deputy from Anjou, known to fame as a patron of Theophilanthropy. The difficulty arose over the accommodation of the Commons, who seated themselves in the places reserved for the clergy and nobles. Larévellière-Lépeaux resented "the deputies of the nation," to use his own words, being hidden away "behind two small privileged bodies." The Marquis de Dreux-Brézé, clad in gorgeous apparel typical of the Orders which incurred the wrath of his interrogator, replied that he was following the precedent of 1614. "What!" cried the representative of the people, "have you been so unobservant of the progress of ideas as not to know that the États-General of 1614 count for nothing here?"

It was not a propitious beginning, but the third Order shuffled to their allotted places in the side aisles, and the ceremony began. The Bishop of Nancy uttered

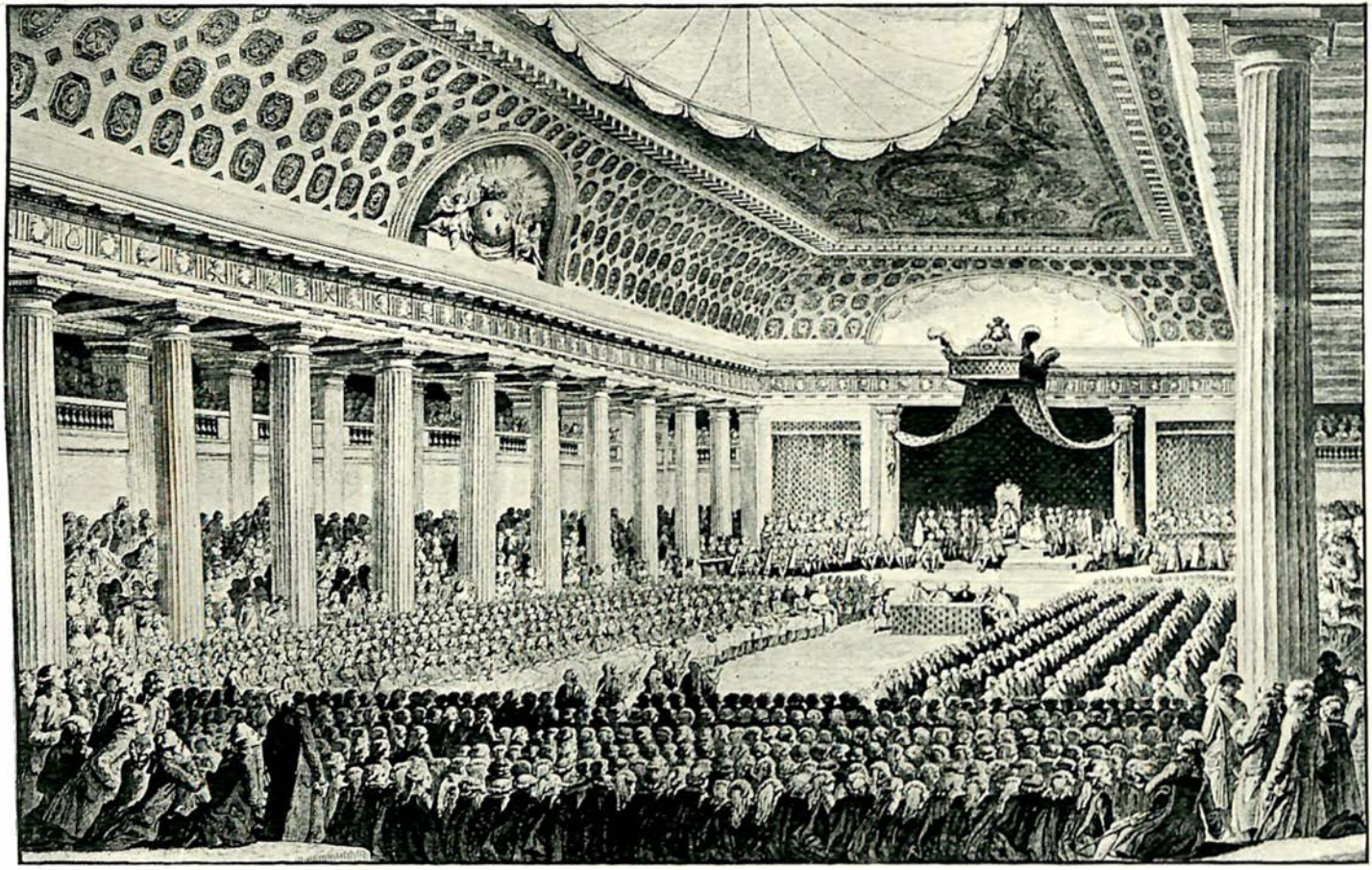
the time-honoured formula used on previous occasions, and thereby struck exactly the wrong note, for Larévellière-Lépeaux had spoken truth. "Receive, O God, the homage of the Clergy, the respects of the *Noblesse*, and the humble supplications of the Third Estate"; such was the supplication. It was as though the Almighty, like previous monarchs of France, allowed the privileged classes to stand, but demanded that the Commons should kneel before Him! A murmur ran through the sacred building, but the feelings of the congregation were calmed by a flood of oratory regarding the miseries of the people, the poverty of the peasant, and the unscrupulous methods of those whose duty it was to collect the excessive taxes.

The great god Precedent again ruled the opening of the States. It took place the following day in the *Salle des Menus Plaisirs*, which had been specially prepared for the Commons at Versailles. The deputies wore costumes similar to those which clothed their forefathers at the previous meeting one hundred and seventy-five years before. On the right of the throne sat the clergy, opposite to them the nobles; the Commons faced the King immediately in the rear of the ministers. A brilliant assembly of courtiers occupied stalls, and every inch of the galleries was crowded by spectators, to the number of perhaps two thousand. It was noticed, however, that the Commons remained with their heads covered—an innovation. The Duke of Orleans, Mirabeau, the deputies of the Commons of Dauphiné, and Necker received enthusiastic applause as they entered the hall, as did Louis when he slowly mounted the raised daïs covered with violet-coloured velvet patterned with lilies, and took his place on the throne beneath a magnificent canopy. The Queen was received in silence. In his speech the monarch referred to the "new force" called into being.

The indebtedness of the State, according to him the result of "an expensive though glorious war," was also touched upon, as was the disposition of the clergy and nobles to renounce their privileges. His most ardent wish was that this epoch might be "for ever memorable in the annals of French prosperity." The former part of his desire was gratified in a way he did not anticipate; it took a greater despot than Louis XIV to restore the glory and wealth of the nation.

Barentin, the Keeper of the Seals, then gave what has been described as "a kind of political homily," and was followed by a wearisome financial statement by Necker, which took him three hours to deliver. When the assembly dispersed at half-past four o'clock in the afternoon the sole topic of conversation was not the things which had been said, but those to which no reference whatever had been made. How were the Orders to vote? Were they to be united or separate? Neither Louis nor Necker had referred to this, the supreme question; Barentin had merely touched on the problem and left it unsolved. "The King," he said, "left it to the States to consider the best manner of collecting the votes, though the vote by head appeared, by giving one general result, to evidence better the general wish." As two smaller halls had been prepared for the clergy and *noblesse*, it certainly looked as though the sittings were not to be held in common.

On the day following the opening of the States the clergy by 133 to 114, and the nobles by 188 to 47, decided to sit as separate Houses. The remaining representatives, declining to regard themselves as a separate Order, sent deputations to the others to join them and awaited events. Having come to this determination they could not proceed to business, because to do so would be to acknow-



THE OPENING OF THE STATES-GENERAL AT VERSAILLES, MAY 5, 1789

(*Engraved by Helman after Monnet, Painter to the King*)

ledge themselves as a chamber apart. The public sided with them, and so of course did a great many of the clergy, as was proved by the small majority obtained in that section. Legal precedent was on the side of the privileged classes, but the conciliatory character of the King and the fairly liberal principles of Necker led the latter at the beginning of June to bring forward a scheme which he hoped would be acceptable to all. It was rejected, and Siéyès therefore proposed to the assembled members of the Commons that the deputies of the other Estates should be invited to the hall to take part in the verification of powers, namely the admitting and registering of each member in the presence and to the satisfaction of the others. Whether the clergy and *noblesse* attended or not was to make no difference, for the measure would be proceeded with either way. By a majority of one the motion was carried. Courteous messages came to hand that the proposition would be discussed, but no definite reply having been received by the Commons at seven o'clock in the evening, the roll of the whole States-General was called, and Bailly, one of the deputies of Paris and later her first Mayor, was elected provisional Chairman of the *Tiers État.*

On the 17th June, by a majority of over 400, the members constituted themselves the National Assembly. The title was chosen after a lengthy discussion, and owed its origin to Legrand, a deputy from Berri. Without any authority other than its own the Assembly willed and decreed "that all taxes or imposts levied without its express, formal, and free concurrence, shall instantly cease throughout the whole Kingdom on the day on which the Assembly is dissolved." Until then all such contributions should remain in force, even though illegal in origin as not having been sanctioned by the nation. The idea, of

course, was to preclude the dissolution of the National Assembly until it had accomplished its purpose, for public opinion was such that the King dare not go against it. "In concert with the King"—the phrase is extremely important, for it shows the temper of the Assembly—it would "fix the principles of a national regeneration" and "devote itself to the consolidation of the National Debt," the creditors being placed "under the safeguard of the honour and loyalty of the French nation." In addition it would "instantly proceed to the consideration of the causes which have produced the present scarcity which afflicts the nation, and the investigation of the most efficacious means which may contribute to its removal; for which purpose a committee shall be instantly appointed."

"Matters are every day growing exceedingly critical," Dorset writes to the Duke of Leeds on the 18th, "yet the King's authority is still paramount, but if his Majesty once gives his decided approbation of the proceedings, such as they have hitherto been, of the Tiers-État, it will be little short of laying his Crown at their feet. The two first Orders, it may be expected, would in case of so marked a preference to their detriment secede. If, however, his Majesty on the other hand should espouse the cause of the Clergy and Nobility, the people, tenacious of the footing to which they find themselves already advanced, and encouraged by the further advantages they have in view, would, if one may judge by the present temper of the times, be ready to support their cause by force, in which case the contest might at the outset be strongly disputed, but the army whose zeal and activity are derived wholly from the Nobility, must soon throw the balance into the King's hands. The army last year was certainly lukewarm in the King's interest, but

the disposition of both Officers and Men is much changed, and they have upon all the late occasions shown themselves to be entirely devoted to the Royal authority.

"The Duc d'Orleans made a motion yesterday for the Nobility to accede to the proposal made to them by the Tiers État, so far as to join that Body in the great Assembly-Room and to deliberate with them in common, but to vote only, *par Ordre:* the motion being in itself quite nugatory, as tending to no salutary end, was rejected by a majority of upwards of 50 votes.

"The Clergy have not lately done anything of consequence, but they seem to be of a somewhat less inflexible disposition than the Nobility, and many of the inferior Clergy want very little encouragement to act in conjunction with the Tiers État.

"It was agitated in the Assembly of the Nobles whether a deputation should be sent to the King to entreat his Majesty to take the affairs of the Nation entirely into his own hands: this, after a very long debate, was rejected by a very considerable majority: though it appeared that their concurrence was withheld only by the necessity, that it was conceived there would be, of calling forth the assistance of the army in case their proposal should be accepted, which it was supposed must inevitably occasion an immediate civil war."

An organised fight against Crown and Court had begun in earnest, for on the 19th the clergy, by a majority of one, joined the Third Estate. On the following day the two Orders which had flung down the gauntlet found the challenge accepted. The hall of meeting was closed by the King's instructions.

CHAPTER XV

HOW ROYAL AUTHORITY WAS LOST

"Bayonets can do nothing against the will of the people."—MIRABEAU.

WHILE perhaps it would be incorrect to say that consternation reigned at Court, the usurpation of the King's authority by the self-constituted National Assembly was regarded as an extremely serious proceeding. Louis, always slow to make up his mind, hesitated as to the best course to be taken in this sudden emergency. His indecision was certainly not helped by the advice gratuitously tendered by Barentin and Necker, both of whom had an audience with him on the day following the momentous decision arrived at by the deputies in the Salle des Menus Plaisirs. The Keeper of the Seals, entirely disregarding the spirit of the times or of the men with whom his master had to deal, was all for keeping the Orders separate; Necker, as usual, wished Louis to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. He was of opinion that the members of the Third Estate should deliberate with the Nobility and Clergy when general topics such as those of taxation and national interests were being discussed, but that questions which affected the respective Orders should be dealt with by them individually. He had already taken the opportunity to inform the King that it was extremely improbable that the troops which had been sent for in case of emergency would act against the Commons. He counselled him "to accede to the reasonable wishes of France." In anticipating the

THE CLERGY JOIN WITH THE THIRD ESTATE

An aquatint of the day in the Hennin Collection. A peasant says: "Shake hands, Monsieur le Curé, I know that you are on our side."

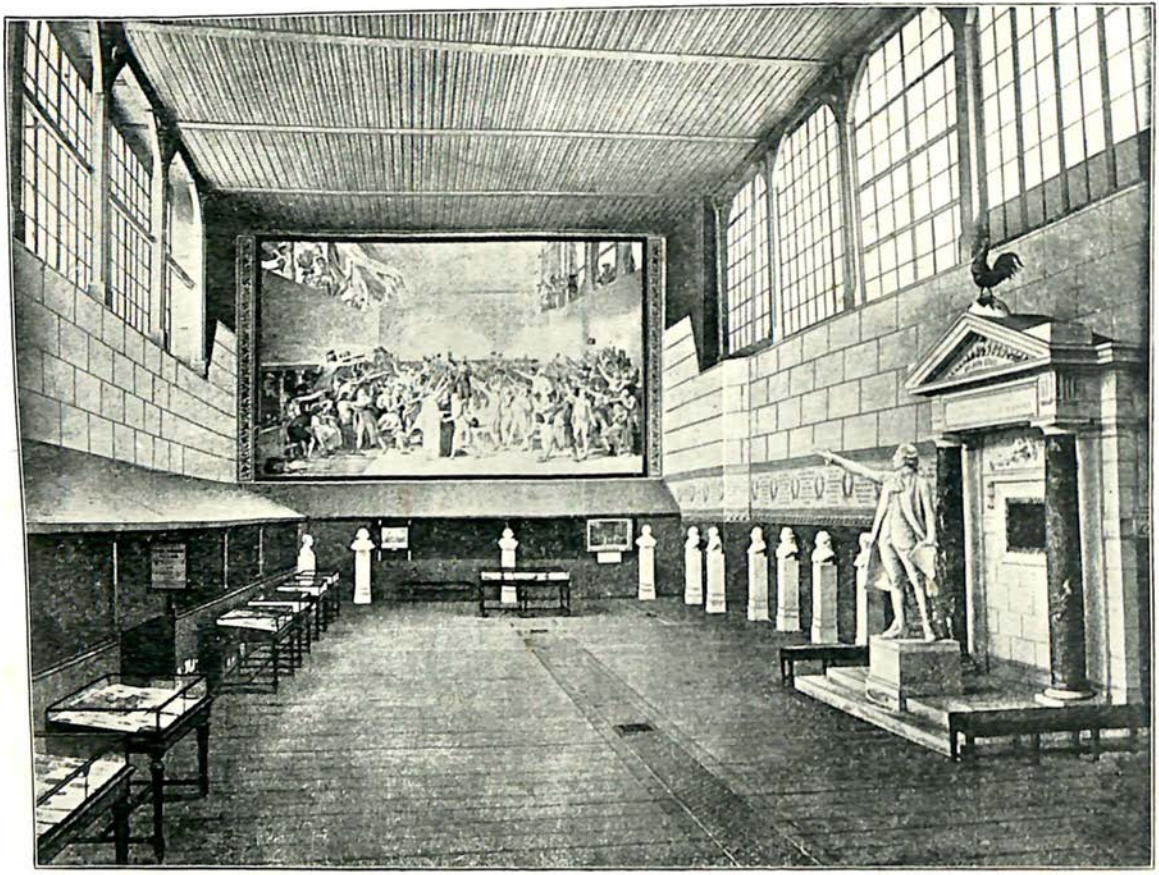
(*By special permission of the French Government*)

desires of the country, "you will have the merit of giving to-day what may, perhaps, be taken from you to-morrow." So far as his own immediate relations were concerned, the monarch received less practical help than that given by the popularity-seeking financier. Marie Antoinette and the Comte d'Artois, the King's younger brother, most emphatically insisted that Louis should adopt a policy of "no surrender." A lamentable lack of cohesion precluded the nobles from doing anything more practical than to send an address to the King, as though a revolution could be stayed by a parchment!

"The spirit of innovation threatens the fundamental laws of the constitution," says this document. "The Order of the Noblesse has observed the law and former usage; it respectfully solicits the same observance from others. . . . The deputies of the Order of the Third Estate conceive that they can concentrate in their own hands the whole powers of the States-General, without awaiting either the concurrence of the other Orders, or the sanction of your Majesty; they have arrogated to themselves the power of converting their decrees into laws; they have ordered them to be printed and sent to all the provinces; they have, in a single decree, destroyed the whole of the taxes, and revived them for a period fixed by themselves, without the concurrence of the King or of the other Orders. It is in the hands of your Majesty that we deposit our protests; and we have no warmer desire than to concur with you in measures for the general good. If the rights which we defend were personal to ourselves, we should have less confidence in maintaining them; but the interests we defend are common to your Majesty and ourselves; they are the bulwarks of the Third Estate themselves: in a word, of the whole French people."

If we can believe that British peers of the realm will some day pass a Bill advocating the dissolution of the House of Lords, we shall have no difficulty in believing the sincerity of the rights which the nobility pretended to guard in the interests of the nation as apart from those "personal to ourselves."

On the 19th June the Council met to consider the situation, the outcome of which was a decision to hold a Royal Session on the 22nd, when the King would make known his will. This is the ostensible reason why the Commons found their hall closed on the morning of the 20th. A little slip of paper nailed on the door informed them that the buildings set apart for the use of the three Orders were shut on account of the necessary preparations for the forthcoming ceremony. The *Gardes Françaises* were stationed about the place, thereby arousing suspicion in the minds of the assembled deputies. They saw in it an astute move, a *coup d'état.* It was unfortunate that the communication sent to Bailly, the provisional President, regarding the interruption of the sittings did not reach him until after the discovery had been made. Bailly and his two secretaries observed the workmen moving about the place when they were granted permission to remove certain papers, and in ordinary circumstances this would have sufficed to prove that the cause of the lock-out was not a subterfuge. With a grim irony not unknown to history, Dr. Guillotin, a Paris deputy whose name is associated with the decapitating apparatus which was to be the principal instrument of terror in the near future, suggested that a meeting should he held in an adjoining tennis-court in the Rue St. François, a bare building without seats, but useful as providing a shelter. The suggestion was taken up with avidity, and the deputies, followed by a mob of people wish-



THE HALL OF THE TENNIS COURT AT VERSAILLES WHERE THE OATH OF JUNE 20, 1789, WAS TAKEN

(*From a photograph*)

ful to know what the next move of the Assembly would be, followed them and poured into the surrounding gallery. Those who were unable to squeeze in remained quietly outside in the drenching rain and anxiously discussed the situation. Nor was this the only sign of the growing popularity of the Commons. The troops who had kept guard during the sittings of the Third Estate threw in their lot with them, and against their commander's repeated orders remained at the Salle du Jeu de Paume. An oath drawn up by Mounier was first taken by Bailly, who was followed by all the remaining deputies.

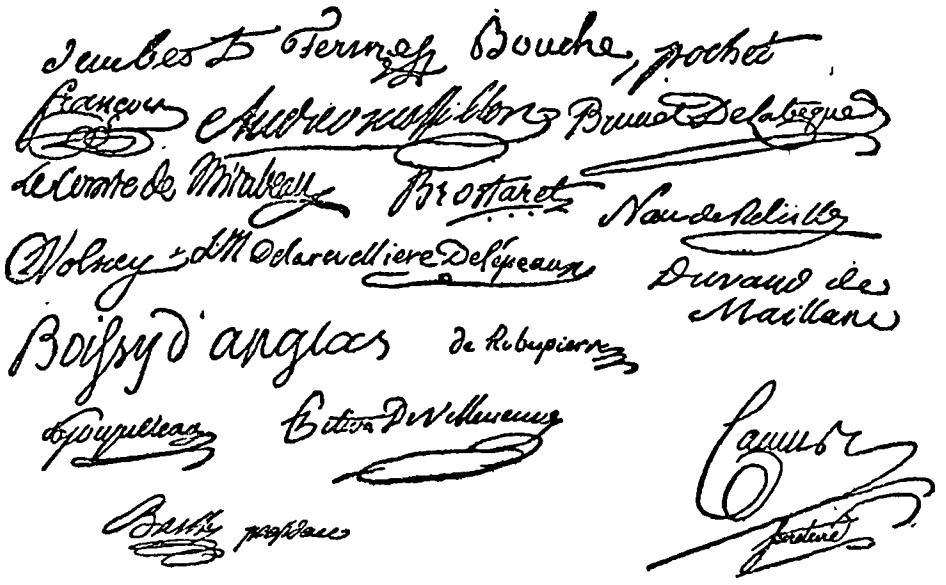
"The National Assembly," it runs, "regarding itself as called upon to establish the constitution of the Kingdom, effect a regeneration of the State and maintain the true principles of monarchy, may not be prevented from continuing its deliberations in whatever place it may be forced to take up its sittings. Maintaining further, that wherever its members are assembled, there is the National Assembly, the Assembly decrees that all the members shall immediately take a solemn oath never to separate, and to come together wherever circumstances may dictate until the constitution of the Kingdom shall be established on a solid basis." This oath, taken by all and each singly, was confirmed by the signature of every member, in token of their unshakable resolution.

The vow, which was the first official reference to the drawing up of a constitution, was all but unanimous, a single deputy, Martin d'Auch, alone refusing to subscribe to it, and Mirabeau did so reluctantly. Cries of "*Vive le Roi!*" resounded through the building at the conclusion of the meeting.[1] The tennis-court being

[1] The tennis-court still stands, but the Rue St. François has been renamed the Rue du Jeu de Paume. The names of the deputies who took the oath are inscribed on the walls, and there is a copy of David's picture of the historic scene.

closed on the following day, business was conducted in the church of St. Louis, where 149 of the clergy, and two nobles threw in their lot with the Commons.

There was much coming and going at Marly, where the King was now in residence. Louis certainly did not



FACSIMILE SIGNATURES TO THE OATH OF THE SALLE DU JEU DE PAUME

(The first three lines are an exact facsimile of the original document in Archives Nationales, Paris. The remainder are selected signatures)

find wisdom in a multitude of counsellors. Ministers of religion saw the Church overthrown. The Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld and the Archbishop of Paris made out a strong case to the King. Marie Antoinette, the Comte d'Artois and the Comte de Provence pleaded with him to disband the rebels; the *Parlement* of Paris requested the dissolution of the States-General. Necker was for reform; Barentin would not have common deliberation at any price.

On the 21st Young confides the following to his diary:

"It is impossible to have any other employment at so critical a moment, than going from house to house demanding news, and remarking the opinions and ideas most current. The present moment is, of all others, perhaps that which is most pregnant with the future destiny of France. The step the Commons have taken of declaring themselves the national assembly, independent of the other orders, and of the King himself, precluding a dissolution, is in fact an assumption of all the authority in the kingdom. They have at one stroke converted themselves into the long parliament of Charles I. It needs not the assistance of much penetration to see that if such a pretension and declaration are not done away, king, lords, and clergy are deprived of their shares in the legislature of France. So bold, and apparently desperate a step, full in the teeth of every other interest in the realm, equally destructive to the royal authority, by parliaments and the army, can never be allowed. If it is not opposed, all other powers will lie in ruins around that of the common. With what anxious expectation must one therefore wait to see if the crown will exert itself firmly on the occasion, with such an attention to an improved system of liberty, as is absolutely necessary to the moment! All things considered, that is, the characters of those who are in possession of power, no well digested system and steady execution are to be looked for."

The royal sitting had been announced to take place on the 22nd, but was postponed until the following day, "for particular reasons," as Dorset wrote to the Duke of Leeds. In the same letter the former mentions that although Paris was quiet, the political situation was discussed "with a marked anxiety and interest" in the coffee-houses and the garden of the Palais Royal. In the neighbourhood of Versailles the peasants had committed "great out-

rages" in the King's game preserves, and several keepers had either been injured or killed in their attempt to prevent poaching. Young, the most interested of observers and the most interesting of narrators, notes that the 60,000 persons who lived about the royal residence "are to the last person in the interests of the commons; remarkable, as this town is absolutely fed by the palace, and if the cause of the court is not popular here, it is easy to suppose what it must be in all the rest of the kingdom."

According to the great agriculturist, the anxiety of the Parisians was also evident in the faces of those who met in the cathedral church of St. Louis and in the streets, so that "the importance of the moment was written in the physiognomy; and all the common forms and salutations of habitual civility lost in attention. . . ." In the evening he dined with the Duc de Liancourt and "a large party of nobility and deputies of the commons," including the Duc d'Orléans, the Abbé Siéyès, and Rabaud St. Etienne. The difference in their demeanour was most marked, for "they eat, and drank, and sat, and walked, loitered and smirked and smiled, and chatted with that easy indifference, that made me stare at their insipidity. Perhaps there is a certain nonchalance that is natural to people of fashion from every habit, and which marks them from the vulgar, who have a thousand asperities in the expression of their feelings, that cannot be found on the polished surface of those whose manners are smothered by society, not worn by attrition. Such an observation would therefore in all common cases be unjust; but I confess the present moment, which is beyond all question the most critical that France has seen from the foundation of the monarchy, since the council was assembled that must finally determine the King's conduct, was such as might have accounted

for a behaviour totally different. The Duc d'Orléans' presence might do a little, but not much; his manner might do more; for it was not without some disgust that I observed him several times playing off that small sort of wit, and flippant readiness to titles, which, I suppose, is a part of his character, or it would not have appeared to-day. From his manner he seemed not at all displeased. The Abbe Syeyes (*sic*) has a remarkable physiognomy, a quick rolling eye; penetrating the ideas of other people, but so cautiously reserved as to guard his own. There is as much character in his air and manner as there is vacuity of it in the countenance of Mons. Rabaud St. Etienne, whose physiognomy, however, is far from doing him justice, for he has undoubted talents."

At last the fatal 23rd dawned, a dull, wet morning. Four thousand soldiers lined the short route, a guard surrounded the hall, others were stationed within easy distance equipped for immediate service should there be disturbance. The procession slowly made its way to the *Menus*, the King[1] took his place on the throne, and after the nobles and the clergy were comfortably arranged the Commons were admitted. Again a bad beginning, an evil portent which boded no good. Evidently the twelve hundred were being "kept in their place," and it was observed that Necker was absent. In his speech, delivered in a very decisive manner not in the least calculated to assuage the angry feelings of the Third Estate, Louis condemned its conduct and annulled its declarations of the 17th June. The reforms promised were by no means trivial. Although future meetings of the States-General were to be regulated by the Crown, no new taxes were to

[1] The *Cambridge Modern History*, p. 156, states that "the crowd for the first time received Louis in gloomy silence," but according to the letter quoted above he was accorded "great acclamations."

be levied, nor those already in force prolonged without the consent of the deputies, and such as existed were only to extend from one session to its immediate successor. A Budget was to be presented, so that the financial affairs of the State could be examined, the *taille* was abolished, the nobles and clergy were no longer to be exempted from taxation, and provincial assemblies were to be established. Important concessions no doubt, but there was a rift in the lute that trilled such sweet music. "You now see," concluded the King, "the result of my wishes and my views; they are agreeable to the lively anxiety I feel to effect the public good; and if, by a fatality which is the furthest from my expectations you abandon me in so noble an enterprise, I will myself accomplish the welfare of my people—I shall consider myself their sole and true representative; and, knowing as I do the instructions you have received and the unison that exists between the wishes of the nation and my own intentions, I shall proceed to effect so desirable an end with all the courage and firmness by what I ought to be inspired.

"Remember, gentlemen, that none of your plans, none of your schemes can become law without my express approval. It is thus that I am the natural guarantee of your respective rights.

"All Orders of the State may rely upon my just impartiality; any distrust on your part would be to me the highest injustice. It is I that have, till now, given my subjects all their happiness, and it is very rare that the only ambition of a sovereign has been to obtain from his subjects a disposition to receive his benefits."

Louis commanded the representatives to disperse at once. "To-morrow you shall come each into the hall assigned to his Order." He had already told them that for the present session only they might on occasion

deliberate in common on matters of public interest, "with the exception of those which regard the ancient and constitutional rights of the three Orders, the forms of convoking the next States-General, the feudal and seignorial rights, and the patrimonial rights and honorary titles of the two first Orders."

Exit the National Assembly, enter Privilege yet again. Likewise exit the King, the majority of the nobles, and many of the clergy on the conclusion of the address, but not so the Commons. They sat on stolidly, indignant at the rebuke they had received, and by no means sure of the policy of half-measures outlined to them by the monarch.

Mirabeau was the first to break the silence, or rather to address the representatives. "Gentlemen," he cried, "I admit that what you have just heard might be for the welfare of the country were it not that the presents of despotism are always dangerous. What is this insulting dictatorship? The pomp of arms, the violation of the national temple are resorted to—to command you to be happy! Who gives this command? Who makes these imperious laws for you? Your mandatory; he who should rather receive them from you, gentlemen; from us, who are invested with a political and inviolable priesthood; from us, in a word, to whom alone twenty-five millions of men are looking for certain happiness, because it is to be consented to, and given and received by all. But the liberty of your discussions is destroyed; a military force surrounds the Assembly. Where are the enemies of the nation? Catiline is at our gates! I propose that, proceeding with becoming dignity, you act up to the spirit of your oath and refuse to separate till you have completed the constitution."

The Master of the Ceremonies, clad in cloth of gold,

entered the hall. "Gentlemen, you have heard the King's orders!"

"Sir," answered the President, "the Assembly was adjourned until after the royal sitting. I cannot separate it without its own consent."

"Yes, sir," put in Mirabeau, assuming the spokesmanship of the rebellious Commons, "we have heard the intentions of the King; and you, who have no seat or voice in this Assembly, are not the person to remind us of his speech. Tell your master that we are here by the power of the people, and that nothing but force will expel us." This sentiment was heartily applauded.

"You are to-day," added Siéyès in his slow, deliberate way, "what you were yesterday. Let us proceed with our deliberations." The decrees of the 17th and 20th June were ratified, and the personal inviolability of the members of the Assembly was declared. When Brézé told Louis what had happened, the King meekly surrendered, and merely said, "Let them stay." "On that day," writes Mignet, "the royal authority was lost. The initiative in law and moral order passed from the monarch to the Assembly."

CHAPTER XVI

THE SOVEREIGN PEOPLE

"Terrible indeed is the rage of the people, but the cold-bloodedness of despotism is atrocious, and its systematic cruelties make more men miserable in a single day than are destroyed by the vengeance of popular insurrections in years."
MIRABEAU.

WITHIN a few hours of the Royal Session the Duke of Orleans, who entertained fond hopes of Louis abdicating and himself being called to the throne, together with forty-seven nobles, including the Duke of Rochefoucauld, the Duke of Liancourt, Count Lally-Tollendal, the Marquis de Lafayette, Clermont-Tonnerre, and the two brothers Lameth—to mention a few of the more commanding personalities—boldly threw in their lot with the Third Estate. Again a deputation of the *noblesse*, headed by the Duke of Luxembourg, waited on Louis, and sought to impress upon him the dire consequences which, in their opinion, the union of the Estates would have on the powers of the Crown. "United," said Luxembourg with a show of wisdom, notwithstanding that the information imparted was rapidly taking on the respectable garb of a platitude, "United, the States-General will no longer acknowledge a master; divided, they are your subjects."

The aristocrats were followed by the clergy, all equally anxious to advise the King. Louis on his part entreated both Orders to unite with the Commons without delay, and sought to still the popular clamour for the moment by requesting Necker, the idol of the

mob, to withdraw his threat of resignation. The King did not urge a sacrifice of conviction on the part of his "faithful clergy and *noblesse*" from any high moral conviction. That he was capable of heroism will be evident as the story proceeds, but at the moment his advice was dictated by expediency. He merely wished to gain time to gather a formidable force of troops to circle Paris, ostensibly for the purpose of suppressing probable riots; in reality to be ready to secure the dismissal of the deputies should it be thought politic to do so. Those immediately at hand were the *Gardes Françaises*, a local auxiliary force. They were already tainted by revolutionary doctrines, and one of the companies had gone so far as to swear that although they would defend the King and were willing to shed their last drop of blood for him, they would lay down their arms if ordered to fire on the people. As German and Swiss mercenary regiments would constitute a certain proportion of those about to arrive, they were not suspect. Indeed, many of them were totally ignorant of the language of the country. Those at Court had little idea that armed public opinion was possible.

The clergy who had not already joined the Commons did so without hesitation, and although there was some cavilling on the part of the nobles, they duly fulfilled the wishes of the monarch. The occasion was marked by polite speeches, and a honeyed, but doubtless sincere speech from Bailly. "This day will be celebrated in our annals," he averred. "It renders the family complete; it for ever closes the divisions which have so profoundly afflicted us; it fulfils the desires of the King, and now the National Assembly will occupy itself without distraction or intermission in the great work of national regeneration and public happiness."

"Forging the Constitution," a Satire on the Three Orders

One of the many coloured prints which appeared in the early days of the States-General.

It was thought proper that the event should be celebrated, for which purpose the Assembly was adjourned until the 3rd July. Illuminations became the order of the day, or rather of the night, and crowds flocked to Versailles shouting for the Royal family to show themselves. The dissatisfaction in the *Gardes Françaises* became increasingly evident; many swore that they would not support the King should occasion arise for their services, and openly boasted of their disloyalty. "There was here," says Thiers, "as well as elsewhere, a *tiers-état* who did everything without bettering their condition." Eleven of the soldiers were imprisoned in the Abbaye for leaving their barracks without official sanction, and were released by an angry mob who broke down the door of the prison. Of the ministers, Necker and Montmorin were alone singled out for popular applause. The Duke of Orleans was acclaimed with tremendous fervour.

Writing home on the 2nd July, Dorset notes that the Swiss regiments "have been extremely attentive to their duty," likewise the dragoons and cavalry which had been quartered in the city and environs. Other regiments were on the march; orders had been given to erect batteries on the heights above Sêve and St. Cloud, "and many hundred men are now employed on the declivity of Montmartre preparing a spot for the same purpose." In addition, "Government has also directed that employment be found for as many workmen as possible on the roads near this city, in order to draw them off from joining in the disaffection which is industriously encouraged in the capital by open discourse and all sorts of inflammatory publications."

At last the Crown was ready for its counter-stroke. On the 11th July, Necker and several ministers identified with his policy were dismissed, to give place to such

reactionaries as the Baron de Breteuil and Maréchal de Broglie, the former as Chief Minister and the latter as Secretary for War. Both were cordially detested in the "good city of Paris"—Breteuil because he was a friend of Marie Antoinette; Broglie as general of the troops in the vicinity of the capital. On the following day, which happened to be Sunday, the news was in everybody's mouth. Camille Desmoulins, young, fiery, and soon to be known as the "first apostle of Liberty," harangued the throng which gathered in the garden of the Palais Royal, telling them that the dismissal of the popular Minister was the ringing of the tocsin which meant "a Saint Bartholomew to all patriots," and inciting them to active resistance. So many versions of his speech have been printed that it is wellnigh impossible to give his actual words, but according to the Marquis de Ferrières, a deputy of the nobility, he said: "Citizens, I am just come from Versailles; there is not a moment to be lost. Monsieur Necker is dismissed! His dismissal is the tocsin that sounds a Saint Bartholomew to all patriots. This very evening the Swiss and German battalions are to come from the Champ de Mars to butcher us. To arms! To arms! We have no other resource." With true oratorical effect he plucked a twig off a near-by tree and placed it in his hat, which improvised cockade received public approval by many others following his example. Green, he told his followers, represented Hope.

Some of the French Guards, together with many thousands of people, paraded the streets with laurel-crowned busts of Necker and Orleans, which they obtained from the waxworks of M. Curtius, Madame Tussaud's uncle, situated on the Boulevard du Temple. They came into collision with the hated Swiss and German mercenary soldiers, with the result that several people were wounded

CAMILLE DESMOULINS (1760–1794)

(From the portrait by Boze in the Chartres Museum)

and an old man was killed. That night the city gates, where the customs officers levied their tolls, were burned by the mob, now reinforced by many of the men employed on the relief works at Montmartre. "It would be difficult," says Bertrand de Moleville, "to paint the disorder, fermentation, and alarm that prevailed in the Capital during this dreadful day; a city taken by storm and delivered up to the soldiers' fury could not present a more dreadful picture. Imagine detachments of cavalry and dragoons making their way through different parts of the town at full gallop to the posts assigned them; trains of artillery rolling over the pavement with a monstrous noise; bands of ill-armed ruffians and women, drunk with brandy, running through the streets like furies, breaking the shops open, and spreading terror everywhere by their howlings, mingled with frequent reports from guns or pistols fired in the air; all the barriers on fire; thousands of smugglers taking advantage of the tumult to hurry in their goods; the alarm bell ringing in almost all the churches; a great part of the citizens shutting themselves up at home, loading their guns, and burying their money, papers and valuable effects in cellars and gardens; and, during the night, the town paraded by numerous patrols of citizens of every class, and even of both sexes; for many women were seen with muskets or pikes upon their shoulders."

Those who were without weapons sought them in the shops of the armourers; food and drink shops were plundered; and above the roar of the crowd the tocsin sounded with dreary monotony.

At the Hôtel de Ville a permanent committee of thirteen electors and an ordinary citizen, presided over by M. de Flesselles, the Provost of the Merchants, sat day and night and assumed the government of the city,

hitherto carried on by nominees of the Crown. The Assembly of Electors had been confirmed in their action by a crowd which met in the Place de Grève in the early hours of the 13th and constituted itself an *assemblée générale*, an old-time institution which had controlled local affairs centuries before. The committee endeavoured to arrange for protection not only against the possible assaults of the army, but also against the lawless throngs which might contemplate its sack, for it was obvious that the "police," which numbered scarcely more than a thousand, and were not altogether untainted, would be next to useless. They speedily organised a militia of citizens provisionally fixed at 48,000 men, exclusive of the *Gardes Françaises*, which were incorporated in the newly-formed body. This was the origin of the famous National Guard, so named on the suggestion of Lafayette. The volunteers were furnished by the sixty districts into which Paris had been divided by the Hôtel-de Ville for electoral purposes, 800 men from each, and those not definitely enrolled were liable to arrest if found armed. The insignia of authority was a red and blue cockade, the colours of Paris, the choice of Camille Desmoulins being rejected because green was associated with the Comte d'Artois.

"The promptness with which the Parisians organised at once this provisional magistracy," says Bertrand de Moleville, an observant and reliable contemporary, "the bourgeois militia, and the sixty district assemblies, has been made too much a wonder. To M. Necker's imprudence belongs the honour of this melancholy miracle, without which the city of Paris would have been under the necessity of submitting to the King's authority, and of imploring his protection against the plunderers. It was the innovating genius of that minister which engendered the Assembly of Electors, and that division of the Capital

THE PEOPLE PATROL THE STREETS OF PARIS ON THE NIGHT OF JULY 12, 1789

(*From a beautiful aquatint in colour by Sergent, 1789, in the Bibliothèque Nationale*)

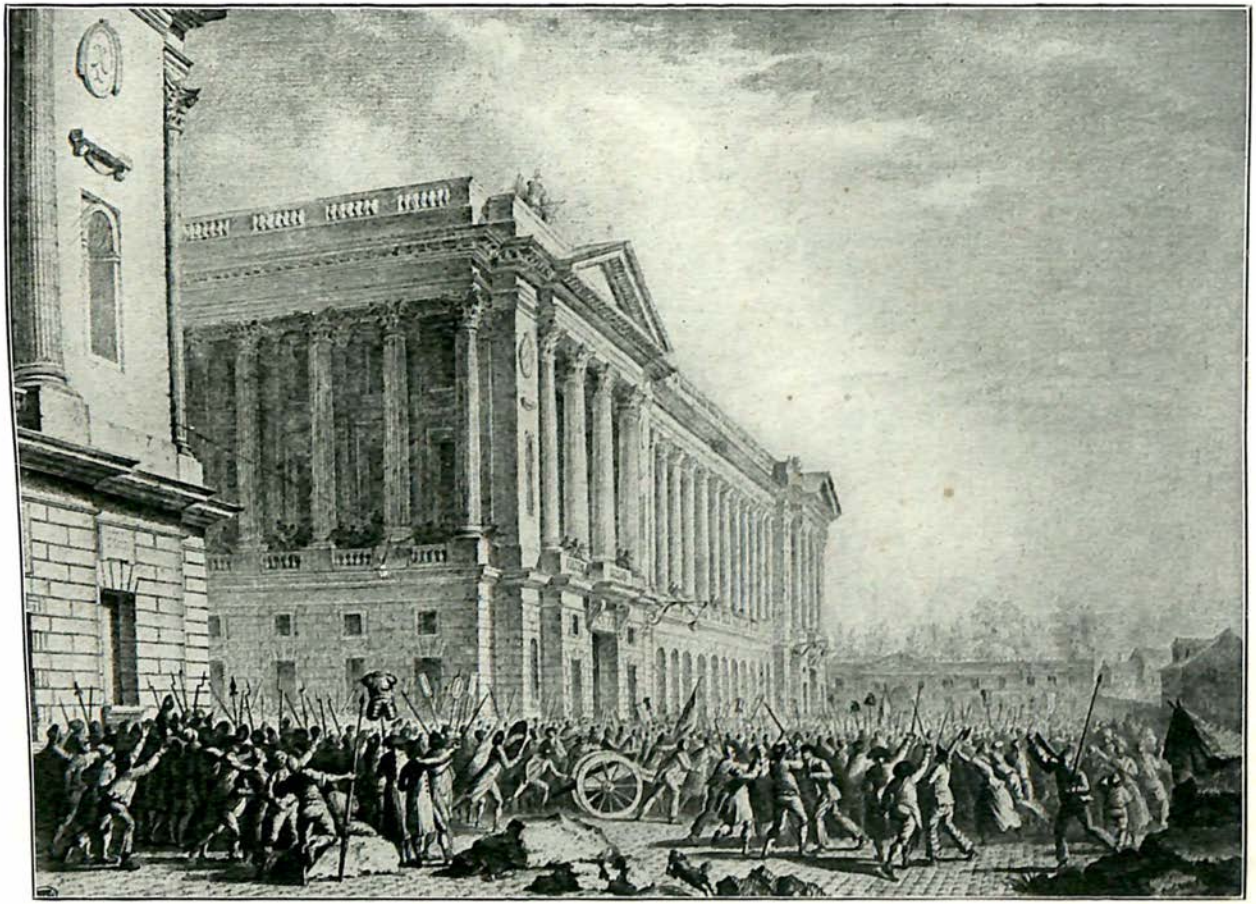
into sixty districts or rounds for the appointment of their respective electors. Without reflecting that in so immense a city as Paris, where the populace is too numerous not to be turbulent, it is always very dangerous to establish or point out to the people a settled place of assembling in each quarter; it is removing the greatest obstacle to a general insurrection. It was then thus this modern patchwork of an Assembly of Electors, and assemblies of districts, devised for the appointment of deputies to the States-General, became the corner-stone of the Revolution."

Similar municipalities and citizen armies sprang into being all over France. The old corporations with their vested interests and their royal nominees disappeared, and local Government, necessarily of a very rough and ready order, was born. As the demand for weapons in Paris still exceeded the supply, the armourers were ordered by the *comité permanent* to fashion pikes and halberds with the greatest possible urgency. Many of the unskilled inhabitants set about fashioning arms for themselves, and made ugly but effective weapons by fixing scythes and similar instruments to poles.

On the 14th the people became increasingly clamorous for weapons. Stacked in the Invalides were 28,000 muskets, in addition to cannon and ammunition. These were required for arming the new militia, and a representative of the permanent committee was sent to request M. de Sombreuil to deliver them up. Unfortunately a mob of excited men and women got to hear of the committee's intentions, and followed the messenger to the building. The crowd surged outside the hospital while the matter was discussed within. When it was known that De Sombreuil had replied that he must await instructions from Versailles the populace took the law into their own hands, besieged the place and com-

mandeered every available weapon. The people and not the *milice bourgeoise* armed themselves that day. Little blame attaches to the Governor for not having resisted such overwhelming numbers. It would have been both futile and foolish.

The capture of the Bastille, the grim fortress-prison which was the symbol of tyranny and despotism, was the natural corollary of the mental contagion now raging in Paris, but the immediate cause of the attack can be traced to a rumour that its cannon were trained on the Faubourg Saint Antoine. It is also said that a courier was intercepted bearing an order to the Governor to hold out to the last extremity if the place were attacked. Although many contemporary pens were busy at the time, the accounts vary so much that we cannot be sure as to which is the most authentic of them. For instance, Pasquier, who was present at the fall of the place which had served Richelieu and his successors in such good stead, tells us that "What has been styled the *fight* was not serious, for there was absolutely no resistance shown. Within the hold's walls were neither provisions nor ammunition. It was not even necessary to invest it. The regiment of *Gardes Françaises* which had led the attack, presented itself under the walls on the Rue Saint-Antoine side, opposite the main entrance, which was barred by a drawbridge. There was a discharge of a few musket shots, to which no reply was made, and then four or five discharges from the cannon. It has been claimed that the latter broke the chains of the drawbridge. I did not notice this, and yet I was standing close to the point of attack. What I did see plainly was the action of the soldiers, *invalides*, or others, grouped on the platform of the high tower, holding their muskets stock in air, and expressing by all means



THE PEOPLE COMMANDEER THE WEAPONS STORED AT THE INVALIDES ON THE DAY OF THE FALL OF THE BASTILLE

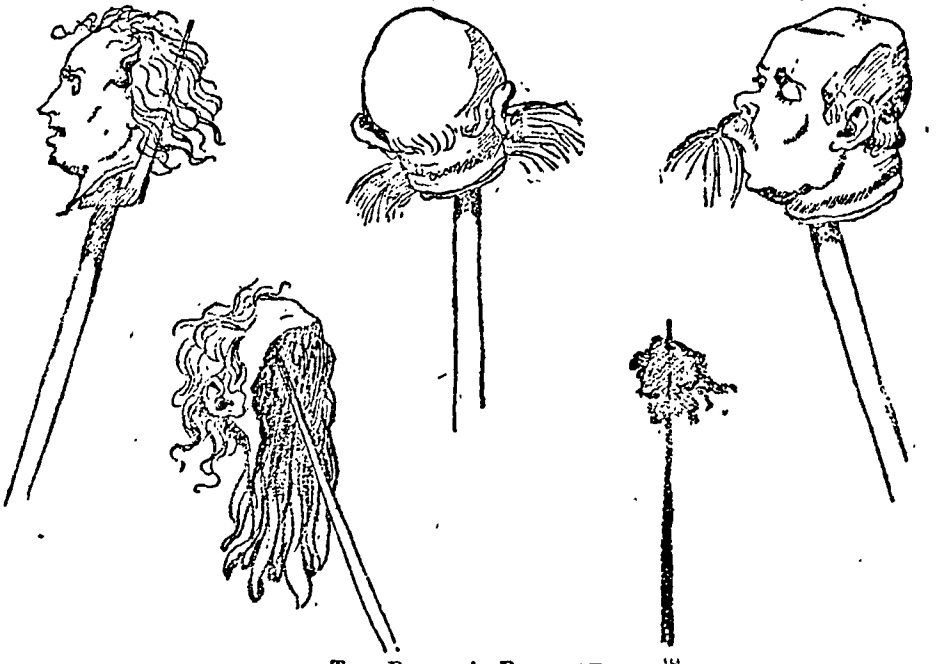
(*From the original drawing by Prieur in the Louvre*)

employed under similar circumstances the desire of surrendering.

"The result of this so-called victory, which brought down so many favours on the heads of the so-called victors, is well known. The truth is, that this great fight did not for a moment frighten the numerous spectators who had flocked to witness its result. Among them were many women of fashion, who, in order to be closer to the scene, had left their carriages some distance away." Pasquier himself was accompanied by Mlle. Contat, one of the prettiest and most talented actresses of the Comédie-Française.

We are informed by other eye-witnesses that De Launay, the Governor, defended the place for several hours, and that the assailants lost two hundred men. Dorset furnishes a most lurid description of the scene. "A flag of truce," he avers, "was sent on before, and was answered from within, notwithstanding which the Governor (the Marquis de Launay), contrary to all precedent, fired upon the people and killed several. This proceeding so enraged the populace that they rushed to the very gates with a determination to force their way through if possible. Upon this the Governor agreed to let in a certain number of them on condition that they should not commit any violence. These terms being acceded to, a detachment of about forty in number advanced and were admitted, but the drawbridge was immediately drawn up again and the whole party instantly massacred. This breach of honour aggravated by so glaring an act of inhumanity excited a spirit of revenge and tumult such as might naturally be expected. The two pieces of cannon were immediately placed against the gate and very soon made a breach which, with the disaffection that is supposed [to have] prevailed within,

produced a sudden surrender of that fortress. M. de Launay, the principal gunner, the tailor, and two old invalids who had been noticed as being more active than the rest, were seized and carried to the Hôtel de Ville where, after a very summary trial before the tribunal there, the inferior objects were put to death, and M. de Launay had also his head cut off in the Place de Grève, but with circumstances of barbarity too shocking to relate. . . ."

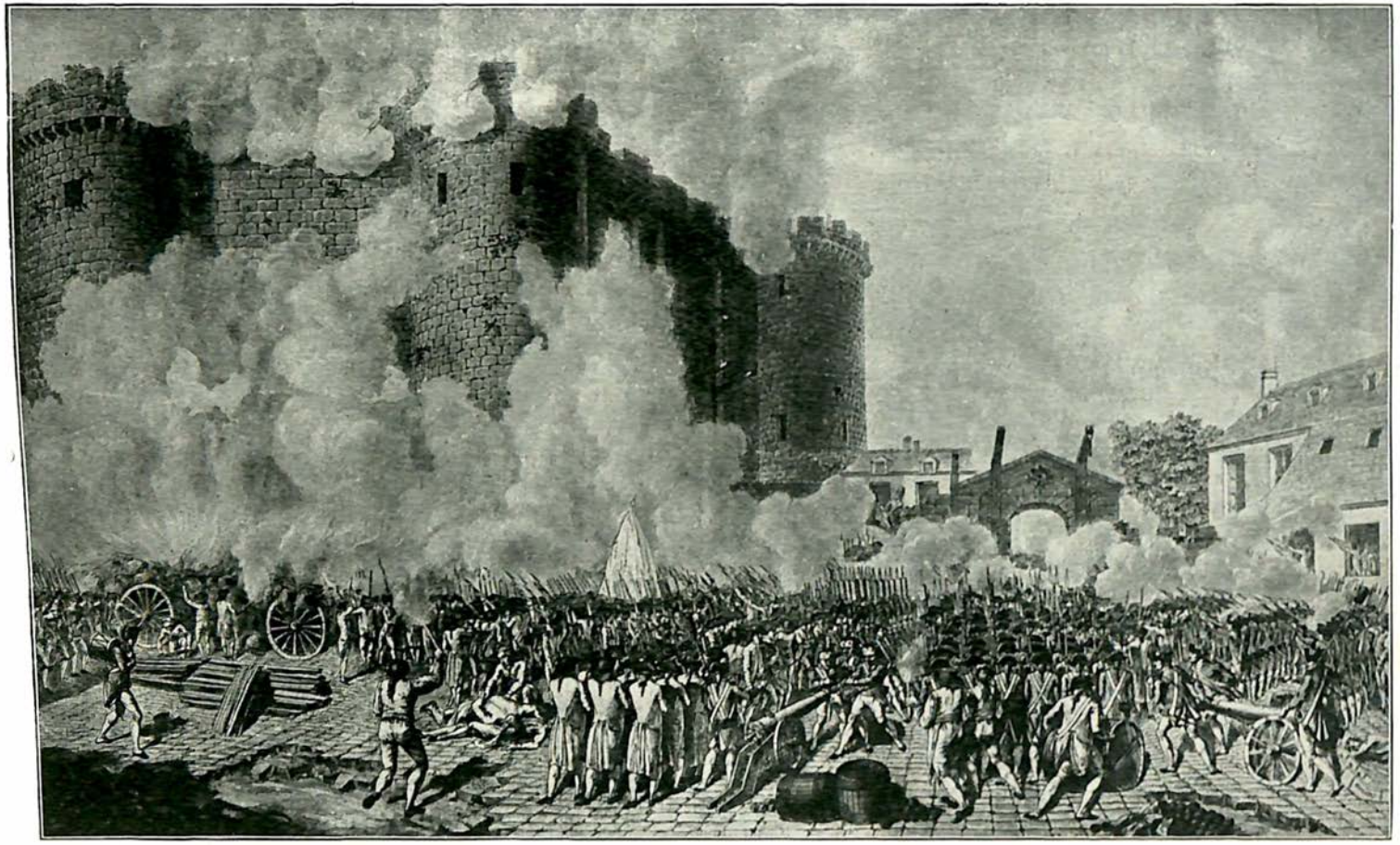


THE PEOPLE'S REVENGE

The heads of De Launay, Governor of the Bastille, Foulon, Councillor of State, and the faceless head and the heart of Berthier de Sauvigny, Intendant of the Palace, on pikes. Drawn by Girodet, who mixed with the crowds, notebook in hand. The Bastille fell on July 14: Foulon and Sauvigny were killed by the people on the 23rd. From the original drawing in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

M. Huber, writing to Mr. Eden[1] on the 16th July 1789, tells a somewhat similar story. In his narrative he asserts that De Launay "made some faint resistance," and afterwards "hoisted out, it is said, a white flag." He suggests that "perhaps two or three hundred" of the

[1] Afterwards first Lord Auckland.



THE STORMING OF THE BASTILLE, JULY 14, 1789

(*From a coloured aquatint by P. F. Germain in the Hennin Collection, by permission of the French Government*)

mob crossed the drawbridge. The cannon then "began to fire briskly among them *à mitraille*," whereupon the men fell on the garrison, let down the bridge, "and by this got all the rest of their detachment in," and after three hours forced De Launay to his last intrenchment and cut off his head.[1] It was generally believed at the time that many political prisoners were pining away in the Bastille, whereas only half a dozen, or at most seven, men were in custody, none of whom had been mixed up in State intrigues. Four had been committed for forgery.

De Frénilly lost a *louis* by wagering that the Bastille had not fallen. It had been deemed impregnable; "there seemed to be as much likelihood of the moon being captured as that fortress." The occurrence was followed, he tells us, "by that astounding panic—an infernal invention, worthy of Laclos and other members of the Orleans council—which hovered over the country for a whole week. There was not a town, village, or house that did not await in terror an army which was to devastate the provinces, and in seven days this great fear succeeded in disarming all the *châteaux*, emptying all the arsenals, and arming all the National Guard. In a week, and free of charge, the Revolution had armed a million men." It was on the night of the 14th–15th July that the Duke de Rochefoucauld-Liancourt awakened the King to tell him of the disastrous doings in Paris. "It is a revolt," said Louis in his usual optimistic way. "Sire," retorted the Duke, "it is a revolution."

The summary vengeance of the mob fell upon M. de Flesselles, the president of the permanent committee at the Town Hall. He was suspected of treachery, was shot by a man in the crowd while they were making their way to

[1] This particular statement is incorrect. De Launay was taken prisoner and murdered on the steps of the Hôtel de Ville. Three officers and four soldiers of the garrison were killed after the surrender of the Bastille.

the Palais Royal, where persons were now put on trial, and his head cut off and placed on a pike as a stern warning to would-be traitors. His office at the Hôtel de Ville was filled by Moreau de Saint-Méry, who with feverish energy sent off a vast number of despatches before the following morning.

Thus we see that there were several opposing factions in Paris. The citizens had confirmed the Assembly of Electors in its work on their behalf, and demanded a *comité permanent* and a *milice bourgeoise*. These were considered essential to the safety of the city, and probably would have been but for the lawless bands which got out of control. Twice in one day they had proved themselves stronger than the *bureau de la ville*, whose methods were far too slow for them. They recognised the authority of the municipality, or pretended to do so, but were not content to abide by its decisions. De Corny had counselled patience at the Invalides, and the mob had sacked the place; people from the Faubourg Saint-Antoine had voiced their fears regarding the guns of the Bastille at the Hôtel de Ville, and a deputation as well as a representative of the committee of the district had been sent to wait on the Governor. A promise had been given that the cannon would not be fired unless the place was attacked. Probably De Launay regarded the demand of the mob for the arms which were in his custody as an "attack." The weight of evidence is in favour of the supposition that he was the first to open fire, but those who helped to capture the place erred in taking the law into their own hands.

Within a few days several hundred workmen were busy with pickaxe and shovel razing the Bastille to the ground. Crowds of people flocked to the place, overjoyed that the conqueror had been conquered, and seeing in that event the dawn of a new era. One of the visitors has left

us his impressions. "I could not help shuddering," he writes, "as I passed over the drawbridges which used to be let down to receive the prisoners, and drawn up the moment they had passed. We proceeded into the interior court, which is so narrow and surrounded by such high walls that I doubt whether the rays of the sun ever entered it. The whole prison—its dark staircases, its mysterious passages, its triple doors plated with iron and fastened by enormous bolts; its cells, which resembled graves prepared for the reception of living bodies; its dungeons, gloomy, damp, and unwholesome, with walls eight feet in thickness; the great stone in the midst of each, which served the double purpose of a bed and a chair; the chain in the middle of the stone, which from its thickness seemed intended to bind a wild beast and not a man—in short, every object which met our eyes inspired us with sentiments of dread and horror. We saw many instruments of torture, the names and the uses of which were entirely unknown to us. Among others, we observed an iron suit of armour made to press upon all the joints, and to seize, as it were, with one grip, the knees, the hips, the stomach, the arms and the neck of the wretch on whom it was fixed. It may be considered as a precious relic of tyranny. I know that it is a long time since these abominable engines have been used, but they were once used; and it is not uninstructive to remember what torments have been invented by slaves to revenge themselves on those who refused to share their slavery and disdained to partake of the infamy of their honours."

The Assembly had not been silent. Its members had met after the public holiday, and very soon began to feel uneasy about the troops which were arming in the vicinity of Paris. Mirabeau moved that a petition be presented to the King praying for the removal of the troops, and that

a guard should be raised in Paris and Versailles for the suppression of any disorder that might arise. In the petition, which was not the work of Mirabeau but of Dumont, his understudy, occurs the following: "We cherish our King; we bless Heaven for the gift it has bestowed upon us in his love." Louis had been misled, but "the danger is pressing, it is universal: it is beyond all the calculations of human prudence." What will restrain the people of the provinces when once they are alarmed for their liberties? "Distance will magnify everything, exaggerate every disorder, embitter every feeling. The danger is for the capital . . . The presence of the troops will produce a universal ferment; and the first act of violence committed under the pretext of keeping the peace will lead to a horrible succession of misfortunes." The peril, as the petition rightly said, was for the troops. Being so near to the centre of discussion, "sharing in the passions, as in the interests of the people," they "may forget that an engagement has made them soldiers to recollect that nature has made them men." A similar danger threatened the Assembly: "We shall be besieged with violent, unmeasured counsels; and calm reason, tranquil wisdom, do not deliver their oracles in the midst of tumult, of disorder, and of faction . . . Great revolutions have sprung from causes less considerable; more than one enterprise, fatal alike to nations and kings, have been announced in a manner less sinister and less formidable." "We beseech you, sire," the document concludes, "to send back the troops, to dismiss to the frontiers the artillery intended to protect them; dismiss above all those strangers whom we pay, not to disturb, but to defend our hearths. Your Majesty has no need of them. A monarch adored by twenty-five millions of Frenchmen can desire no additional support from a few thousand foreigners."

In reply Louis said that it was necessary that he should make use of the means at his disposal to maintain public order, and to ensure freedom in the deliberations of the Assembly. For these reasons troops had been concentrated about Paris, but he was willing to allow the deputies to transfer their business to Noyon or Soissons, and he would take up his residence at Compiègne so as to be near them.

This reply was not at all satisfactory to the majority of the Assembly, whose opinion was voiced by Mirabeau in no uncertain language. "The word of the King," he said, "is a sufficient security for his own intentions, but none at all for those of a Minister who has more than once violated his oath. Is any of us ignorant that it is want of foresight, blind confidence in others, which has brought us to our present predicament, and which should open our eyes if we would not continue forever slaves? The answer of the King is in effect a refusal. We asked the removal of the troops from ourselves; we did not ask the removal of ourselves from the troops. The presence of the troops near the Capital threatens public peace, and may produce the greatest dangers. Those dangers would not be diminished, but, on the contrary, greatly augmented, by the removal of the Assembly. Let us continue to insist on the removal of the troops as the only means of safety."

The Assembly was to a very great extent ignorant of what was passing in Paris, twelve miles away. Rumours, often enough entirely contradictory, reached the ears of the deputies, and for two days there were both day and night sittings. Regrets were expressed at the dismissal of Necker and his colleagues, and it was ordered that henceforth Ministers should be held responsible to the Assembly. On the evening of the 14th news arrived

that the King was bent on flight, that the arms of the Invalides had been secured by the populace, and the Bastille besieged. A little later representatives of the permanent committee at the Town Hall entered with the intelligence that the prison-fortress had fallen. A deputation had already waited on the King, and a second deputation was about to start, when the first entered with the news that Louis had acceded to their request for a citizen-guard and the removal of the troops on the Champs de Mars.

It was decided, however, that the twenty-four deputies should wait on Louis. "Tell him," thundered Mirabeau, "that the hordes of strangers who invest us received yesterday visits, caresses, exhortations and presents from the princes, princesses, and favourites. Tell him that during the night these foreign satellites, gorged with gold and wine, predicted in their impious songs the subjection of France and invoked the destruction of the National Assembly. Tell him that in his own palace courtiers danced to the sound of that barbarous music, and that such was the prelude to the massacres of Saint Bartholomew. Tell him that the Henry whose memory is universal, him whom of his ancestors he said he would make his model, sent provisions into rebellious Paris when besieging it in person, while the savage advisers of Louis send away the corn which trade brings into his loyal and starving capital."

It was Louis who came to the Assembly, and not the Assembly to Louis. He came without pomp and ceremony, accompanied only by his brothers, to deliberate with "his faithful deputies." "I declare myself for ever united with the nation," he averred during the course of his short speech, "and, relying on the fidelity of the National Assembly, I have given orders to remove the troops from Versailles and Paris,

and I authorise you to make my instructions known to the Capital." So great was the relief at this pronouncement that the legislators formed a guard of honour as the King returned to the palace. Obedient to his request, a deputation hastened to Paris. According to Dorset, "the coolness with which this news was received seems to have thrown everybody again into the utmost consternation, and, to judge by circumstances, the diffidence of the people is greater than ever, for all the barriers are doubly guarded. . . . The disposition of the people at this moment is so unfavourable to the Court that I should not be surprised if the States-General, by appearing to give too much credit to the King's professions, should lose the consideration in which they have hitherto been held by the Nation. The Populace will not easily forgive the removal of M. Necker; for they seem determined to push their resentment to the utmost lengths: but God forbid that should be the case, since they have already got the upperhand, for who can trust to the moderation of an offended multitude? The regularity and determined conduct of the populace upon the present occasion exceeds all belief, and the execration of the nobility is universal amongst the lower order of people. . . . Everybody since Monday has appeared with a cockade in his hat: at first green ribbons were worn, but that being the colour of the Comte d'Artois' livery, red and white in honour of the Duc d'Orleans have been substituted." The writer adds that "the greatest Revolution that we know anything of has been effected with, comparatively speaking, if the magnitude of the event is considered, the loss of very few lives: from this moment we may consider France as a free Country; the King a very limited Monarch, and the nobility as reduced to a level with the rest of the nation."

Events were to prove that the summarising of Leeds was entirely wrong. The Revolution as an active organisation had scarcely begun its work, France was neither a free country nor was it destined to be for several decades, and the *noblesse* were reduced to a far lower level than the peasants who fired the châteaux of their former masters and made bonfires of the feudal deeds which had been responsible for the misery of generations.

Marbot, whose *Mémoires* are usually reliable when he is not relating his own adventures on the battlefield, tells us how the peasants, "hounded on by ringleaders from Beaulieu," visited his father's château, and "with all the delicacy in the world, and with even some show of politeness, told my mother that they were under the necessity of burning such title-deeds of feudal dues as we still had, and also of satisfying themselves that the *émigrés*, her brothers, were not hidden in the château. My mother received them with admirable courage, surrendered the title-deeds, and pointed out to them that as they knew her brothers to be men of intelligence, they must see that it was not likely they had emigrated only to return to France immediately and hide in her château. They admitted the justice of the argument; and after drinking, eating, and burning the title-deeds in the middle of the courtyard, they went off without further damage, shouting '*Vive la Nation et le Citoyen Marbot!*' and charged my mother to write and tell him that they loved him very much, and that his family was perfectly safe among them."

In Franche Comté many splendid houses were destroyed; fights attended by bloodshed took place at Rouen; in Brittany soldiers refused to obey their officers and made common cause with the people, and a National Guard became general throughout the kingdom. Rumour of mysterious "brigands" sent by the aristocrats to cut

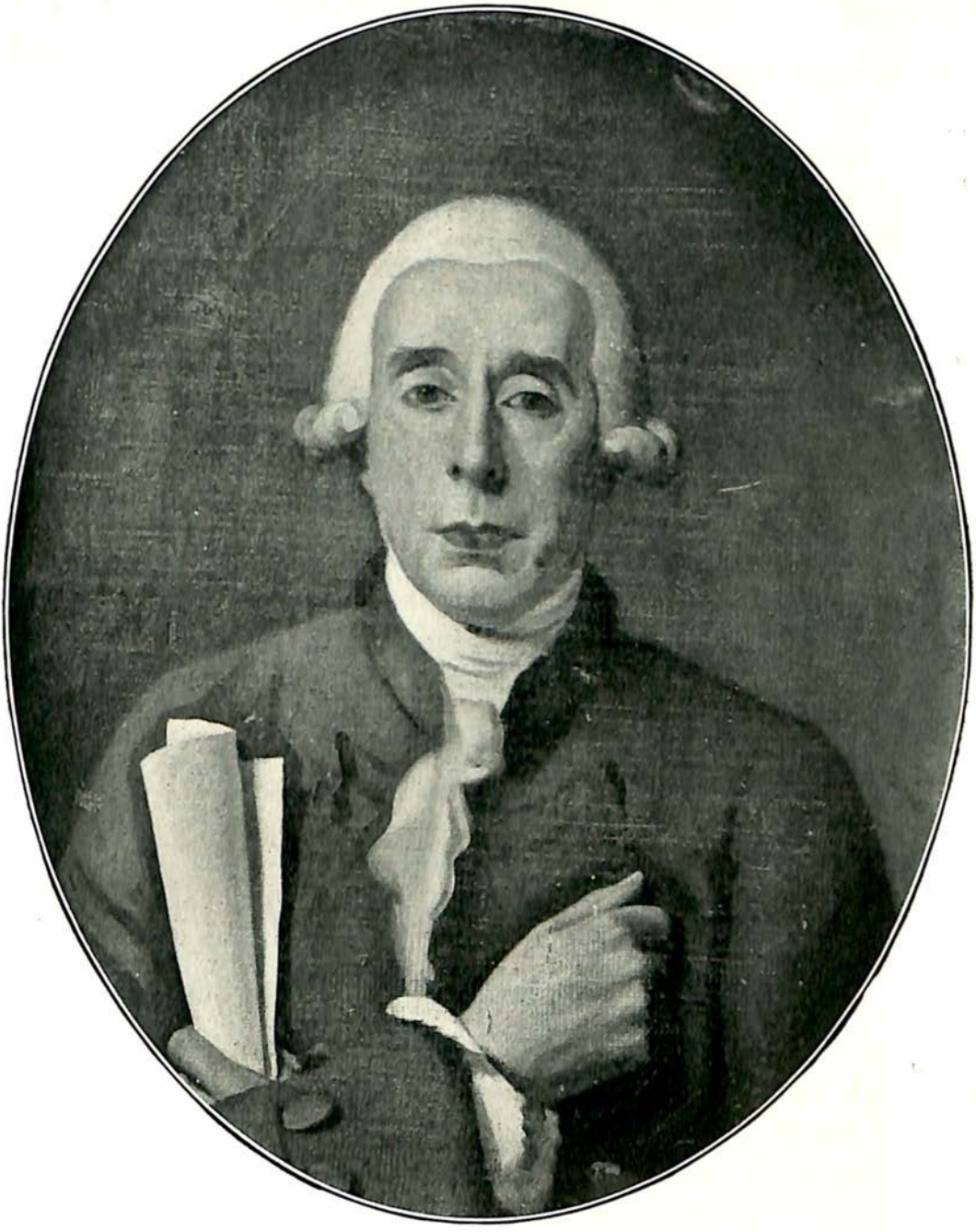
down the people's corn spread along the country-side and grew until it became "the great fear."

Bailly and Lafayette, who were among the delegates sent by the Assembly to the Hôtel de Ville, were signalled out for favour, the former becoming Mayor of Paris in succession to the unfortunate Flesselles, who had merely held the title of *Prévôt des Marchands;* the latter being appointed Commandant of the newly organised militia. So great was the enthusiasm aroused that a solemn *Te Deum* was sung in Notre Dame, and the nave and aisles were filled with an excited and jubilant crowd.

Before the end of July the municipality had undergone reconstruction and become the Commune of Paris. At the request of Bailly and Lafayette, delegates of the number of 120, subsequently raised to 300, were chosen by the districts to draw up a scheme of municipal government. So far so good; but they ventured beyond, and granted the delegates power to become the executive authority. The local Assemblies continued to meet and to frame laws for their own particular districts, utterly disregarding whenever they pleased the orders of those into whose hands they had committed the charge, and to whom they really dictated. As a result there was no supreme power, but sixty miniature republics. The danger was voiced in the National Assembly by Mounier. "There is no saying," he averred, "whither such multiplying of states within states, sovereignties within sovereignties, may lead us." However, the people had their way, and the constitution of the Commune of Paris received the assent of the National Assembly. The example of the Capital was speedily copied by other cities. "In effect," writes Eden a few weeks later, "the Kingdom of France is at this hour governed by some

nameless individuals who assemble every morning and evening at the Hôtel de Ville de Paris. The Court of Versailles is not only in appearance but in fact in a state of imprisonment. The nominal Ministers of the country avow without reserve that they are merely nominal."

Baron de Frénilly, always inclined to be cynical, has given us a somewhat unfavourable portrait of Bailly, whose chief claim to fame was as author of *L'Histoire de l'Astronomie:* "A member of the Academy of Sciences, and rightly so, for he was a *savant* of the first order—a member of the French Academy, and again with justice, for he was a writer of great talent, he veiled this double honour with a gentle, serene modesty, an absolutely unaffected simplicity. When in the drawing-room he was merely a man of affectionate good manners, unpretentious, never disputatious, full of pure sentiments and noble aspirations—a splendid model of virtue, honour, and true philosophy. He had neither enviers nor enemies. When the States-General came, this man, who asked for nothing, was overwhelmed with votes, and when it was necessary to appoint a Mayor of Paris he again received them. That day of triumph, however, was his ruin. His modesty capitulated, he thought himself a great man, and he became ridiculous. *Dignus imperii si non imperasset.* Heaven had granted him a wife who was exactly proportioned to his little *entre sol* in the Louvre: a good housekeeper and nurse who adored him, a talkative, common, ignorant, stupid woman, but tender and devout, as is necessary, in fact, for an Academician. Behold her, through a stroke of the wand, seated in an immense gilded *salon* thronged with citizens and courtiers, and you may imagine what a powerful auxiliary she was to the sarcasms which were already showered on her poor husband."



JEAN SYLVAIN BAILLY (1736–1793), FIRST MAYOR OF PARIS

(From the painting attributed to J. F. Garneray in the Musée Carnavalet)

It was at this time that the first emigration began. "We are crowded with Frenchmen," writes T. Somers Cocks to W. A. Miles in a letter dated Charing Cross, August 25th, "who come every week from their own country to enjoy the freedom of ours, many of whom rejoice when they are safely landed." The immediate cause of the preliminary withdrawal of the opposition was the Palais Royal, which published a list of people who were considered traitors to their country, and therefore worthy of death. Those who set the example included the Comte d'Artois, the King's brother; the Polignac family, the Queen's friends; the Duc de Bourbon, and the Maréchal de Broglie—"the whole infernal set," as Auckland has it, "which has been so long working at the ruin of the kingdom, making, with their suite, between twenty and thirty carriages, which are gone with and under protection of the fugitive army, M. de Broglie in the centre. Oh! where were you, my dear sir, that you could not contemplate (as a man) so awful, so great, so sudden a revolution? Why could not you see with your own eyes that frivolous people of Paris turned at once into a people of heroes, achieving in twenty-four hours what imagination itself cannot compass?" It was soon noised abroad that the Comtesse de Polignac had left for Spa, then as now a fashionable watering-place, and that in addition to her and the King's brother, the Condés, Breteuils, Contis, Vaudreuils, Enghien, Vermond, and many others had suddenly disappeared as morning mist before the rising sun. Many of them settled at Turin, and there began a long course of intrigues and incitement to civil war. What was not generally known was that Marie Antoinette had used her utmost influence to persuade her husband to fly to Metz and carry out a similar policy to that pursued by the *émigrés*.

On the night of the 16th July—a memorable date, because the deputies of the Assembly had debated if they had the power to demand the recall of Necker, and Louis had forestalled their wishes—a courier arrived in Paris to announce that the King intended to come to his capital on the morrow. This visit was not altogether voluntary on the part of Louis. Fifty deputies had driven into the city for the purpose of seeing at first hand what had happened. They had been greeted with shouts of "Long live the National Assembly!" followed by the ugly question, "Where is the King?" Taking their cue from this, the deputies had appealed to Louis to show himself in Paris as evidence of his good faith, and as a kind of personal guarantee that he would not take summary vengeance on its inhabitants for their lawless behaviour.

Louis was uncertain as to his reception, and went so far as to confess and receive the sacrament, as though fearful of the result of the journey. He duly arrived in his state coach drawn by eight horses, and there the pomp and pageantry of royalty ended on this occasion.

His escort was not the army, but the newly-born *Milice Bourgeoise*, which lined the way from the barrier at Passy to the Town Hall, Lafayette riding a few yards in front of the coach. When Louis reached the Place de Louis XV, cries of "*Vive la Nation! Vive Necker! Vivent les Gardes Françaises!*" burst forth from the assembled multitude. A correspondent writing from Paris at this time calls the King's entry "one of the most humiliating steps that he could possibly take. He was actually led in triumph like a tame bear by the deputies and the City Militia." "Sire," said Bailly as he received the monarch at the gates

THE FIRST FUGITIVES OF THE REVOLUTION

(From an aquatint in the Hennin Collection, given by special permission of the French Government. Hennin identified them thus: No. 1, Mde. de Polignac; 2, D'Artois; 3, Condé; 4, Baron de Breteuil; 5, Prince Lambese; 6 and 7, Personages of the Court)

according to time-honoured custom, "I bring your Majesty the keys of your good town of Paris. They are the same which were presented to Henry IV; he had reconquered his people, now the people have reconquered their King."

The withdrawal of the troops and the recall of Necker were sufficient proofs of Bailly's assertion, which was echoed by Moreau de Saint-Méry, of the permanent committee, who told Louis that birth had put the crown upon his head, but the will of the people kept it there.

"In truth," says Ferrières, "everything announced a victory. One hundred and fifty thousand men armed with scythes, pick-axes, pikes, muskets, offered a spectacle majestic at the time, and terrible cannons on the bridges; and at the entrance of the streets through which Louis had to pass, seemed to say but too clearly, 'It is a great captive, and not a King, who is now coming into his capital, into the midst of his subjects.'

"An immense mass of people, like a great and troubled sea, smoothness, indeed, on its surface, but hollow murmuring in its depths, gave a mournful air to this vast and imposing spectacle. Every countenance seemed sombre, every look seemed cold, and every heart seemed closed against all the sentiments that once used to animate the hearts of Frenchmen for their King. The carriage moved on, surrounded by a numerous troop of people on horseback and on foot; the French Guards with their artillery at the head of the column; a confused sound of musketry. The cries were a thousand times repeated of '*Vive la nation!*' Not a word of the King; the most offensive silence, everywhere the humiliating haughtiness that proclaimed a triumph."

Not until Louis had left his carriage and donned the tri-coloured cockade was "*Vive le Roi!*" heard. On

his return to Versailles, after having confirmed the nominations of Bailly and Lafayette by the Comte de Lally-Tollendal, he was met by the National Assembly and escorted to the palace. A very general opinion had been expressed at Court that his assassination was contemplated. The passionate way in which Marie Antoinette greeted Louis on his return showed that she had entertained serious misgivings during his absence.

The mob secured a victim in Foulon, the Minister of the King's Household. It was asserted that he had remarked during one of the frequent periods of scarcity that the populace was fit for nothing but to eat hay. The mere fact that he was connected with finance was sufficient to make him a suspect. He had warning of what was likely to happen, and caused it to be announced that he had died suddenly, to which every appearance of truth had been given by his family and servants appearing in mourning attire. Somebody found that the old man had merely retired to a friend's country house. He was traced, seized, and brought to the Town Hall of Paris for trial. Bailly did his best to get him sent to the Abbaye; the mob shouted him down, dragged the helpless man out of the building, and hanged him on the support of a lantern at the corner of the Place de Grève, afterwards stuffing the mouth of the victim with hay. Berthier de Sauvigny, his son-in-law and intendant of Paris, was disposed of in similar fashion. He was arrested at Compiègne and conveyed in a carriage to the Hôtel de Ville, where he saw the head of his relative on a pike. As he was leaving the building in custody of a guard, some of the more desperate characters clutched at him, tore him away, and speedily put an end to his life. Lafayette, justly indignant at these examples of mob law, sent in his resignation,

which was rejected. Having performed the fell deed, the mob attempted to bring the head on a pike for the inspection of the judges, but were refused admission because the committee was sitting. "In these terrible moments," writes Bailly in his *Mémoires*, "pretexts were to be made use of to escape from these atrocities; there was a real danger—it was useless to brave it—to those who attempted to speak the language of justice and humanity; the people would hear nothing; whoever thought not with them was supposed a traitor."

Thus both the King and the municipality appeared to be at the none-too-tender mercies of the populace, and the National Assembly, bent on drawing up a constitution according to the Tennis Court Oath, was unable to proceed with its task because of the "sudden wild alarms" which continually reached Versailles. As to the *Parlement* of Paris, its power was to all intents and purposes abrogated by the Assembly. France as a whole, however, remained loyal to Louis.

"There were perhaps ten of us republicans in Paris on July 12, 1789," writes Camille Desmoulins. "These republicans were for the most part young men, who, nourished on the study of Cicero at college, were thereby impassioned in the cause of liberty. We were educated in the ideas of Rome and Athens, and in the pride of republicanism, only to live abjectly under a monarchy, in the reign, so to speak, of a Claudian or a Vitellius. Unwise and fatuous Government, to suppose that we, filled with enthusiasm for the founders of the Capitol, could regard with horror the vampires of Marseilles, or admire the past without condemning the present; *ulteriora mirari, præsentia secutura.*"

CHAPTER XVII

THE RIGHTS OF MAN

"What a scene is France! While the Assembly is voting abstract propositions, Paris is an independent Republic! the provinces have neither authority nor freedom, and poor Necker declares that credit is no more, and that the people refuse to pay taxes." GIBBON.

ON the 19th July 1789 Mirabeau pictured in glowing colours the extraordinary changes which had occurred within so short a period. "The capital passing from despotism to liberty, from terror to perfect security," was one of the phrases he used—doubtless picturesque and as certainly untrue. The establishment of the National Guard, the taking of the Bastille, the recall of Necker, the King "restored to confidence," were events "astonishing in themselves" that would produce "incalculable effects which are beyond the reach of human foresight to divine." There was, however, a deep shadow aslant this picture, as we have partly seen. As July drew towards its close, the grim spectre of famine appeared. Business was practically at a standstill, artisans and labourers gossiped, but refused to work, and many tradespeople who depended on wealthy clients were speedily ruined because their customers thought it advisable to put as many leagues as possible between Paris and themselves. The municipality, or rather the committee to whom the work had been delegated, did its best to cope with the growing demands of the wageless people for bread. This task was all the more difficult because the farmers no longer brought their provender to be sold for fear of the carts being looted. The Committee had therefore to

send regiments to the country to fetch corn, which was ground and then sold to the populace at a reduced rate, necessitating the spending of large sums of money which it was impossible to replace. The utmost precautions had to be used during the transit of wheat, because many of the rural districts were as badly off for provisions as was the capital, and the inhabitants of the corn-growing districts bitterly resented the removal of foodstuffs. It was by no means rare for waggons to be pillaged when there was a chance to do so, and violence was not unknown. The bad harvest of the previous year, followed by a particularly inclement winter, had an aftermath of distress and want typified by thousands of wanderers living either on the proceeds of begging or of theft.

Groenvelt, who was in Paris at the time, makes special mention that "There is a very numerous class of men in this metropolis, who, though they do not frequent the Assemblies of the districts, are by no means indifferent about politics, but hold assemblies of their own in public places, in the Palais Royal, in the streets, wherever they happen accidentally to collect together. They are, in general, men of distressed circumstances, with little or no employment; some supporting a precarious existence by alms, condemned to a life of misery, and consequently restless, dissatisfied, greedy after news, or rather impatient for change. Nearly one hundred thousand individuals are supposed to have emigrated. Judge from this circumstance what an army of servants out of place, labourers out of work, men wholly dependent on the luxuries of the great, and now stripped of all resources, must have been turned loose upon the public. . . . Falsehood is the constant and the favourite resource of the cabals which prevail here. You cannot form an idea of the impudence with which the most palpable lies

are published and propagated among the people. The most positive assertions, the most minute details of facts, the strongest appearance of probability, are made to accompany the grossest falsehoods. Foulon and Besenval were the victims of pretended letters, of which a thousand copies have been seen, but no original. The convent of Montmartre has been twice beset by twenty or thirty thousand men, who threatened it with destruction for having monopolised the food of Paris; it was searched, and there was scarcely found provisions enough to supply the house. At one moment it is affirmed that the aristocratic conspirators have thrown a great quantity of bread into the Seine; at another, that they mowed the green corn. The public is overwhelmed with lies and calumnies."

One has only to follow Arthur Young's itinerary to appreciate the fact that scarcity of bread and riots almost invariably went hand in hand. At Nangis, where Young was the guest of the Marquis de Guerchy at his château, the entertaining author of *Travels in France* was told by the hairdresser who attended on him that distress was very prevalent, that those who had work made insufficient money to keep body and soul together in anything approaching comfort, and that many were entirely without occupation. He also notes that, by order of the magistrates, no person was allowed to purchase more than two bushels of wheat at a market: "Being here on a market-day, I attended, and saw the wheat sold out, under this regulation, with a party of dragoons drawn up before the market-cross to prevent violence. The people quarrel with the bakers, asserting the prices they demand for bread are beyond the proportion of wheat, and proceeding from words to scuffling, raise a riot, and then run away with bread and wheat for nothing: this

has happened at Nangis and many other markets; the consequence was, that neither farmers nor bakers would supply them till they were in danger of starving, and, when they did come, prices under such circumstances must necessarily rise enormously, which aggravated the mischief, till troops became really necessary to give security to those who supplied the markets." Young found similar trouble at Coulommiers: "Conversation here, as in every other town of the country, seems more occupied by the dearness of wheat than on any other circumstance. . . ." He was at Nancy when news was received of the confusion at Paris consequent on the removal of the ministry and of Necker. The effect on the people "was considerable." "What will be the result at Nancy?" he asked of several citizens, and invariably received an answer to the effect that "We are a provincial town, we must wait to see what is done at Paris; but everything is to be feared from the people, because bread is so dear, they are half starved, and are consequently ready for commotion." In this matter Young makes one of his usual shrewd comments. "Without Paris," he says, "I question whether the present revolution, which is fast working in France, could possibly have had an origin." At Strasburg "the Parisian spirit of commotion" was everywhere evident; a mob shattered the windows of the houses of unpopular magistrates, clamoured for meat at five *francs* a pound, and broke into the Town Hall and destroyed whatever they could lay their hands on, including so much of the fabric as was possible. At Belfort the people demanded the arms in the magazine, and at L'Isle-sur-le-Doubs Young found it necessary to secure a cockade, "which I took care to have so fastened as to lose it no more." At Besançon he notes in his diary that "The mischiefs

which have been perpetrated in the country, towards the mountains and Vesoul (Haute Saône), are numerous and shocking. Many châteaus have been burnt, others plundered, the seigneurs hunted down like wild beasts, their wives and daughters ravished, their papers and titles burnt, and all their property destroyed; and these abominations not inflicted on marked persons, who were odious for their former conduct or principles, but an indiscriminating blind rage for the love of plunder. Robbers, galley-slaves, and villains of all denominations have collected and instigated the peasants to commit all sorts of outrages." In the inn at Dijon where the genial agriculturist stayed he met a seigneur, his wife, family, three servants, and a baby who had escaped from their burning château. At several places he was taken for a friend of the Queen sent to measure the fields for the purpose of doubling the existing taxation. Nothing was bad enough to say of Marie Antoinette, who was everywhere regarded as the enemy of *la belle France*. It would be quite easy to multiply these instances of insurrection, but every student of the period is bound to read Young's *Travels*[1] if he wishes to obtain first-hand evidence of the distress and disorder which were gradually spreading throughout the country. Letters and memorials were frequently sent to the Assembly regarding the destruction of property, the burning of châteaux and convents, the pillaging of farms, and so on. A report to the Assembly submitted on the 3rd August by one of its numerous committees mentions that "the laws are without force, the magistrates without authority, and justice is no longer more than a phantom, which it is vain to seek in the courts."

On the 4th August one of the most memorable

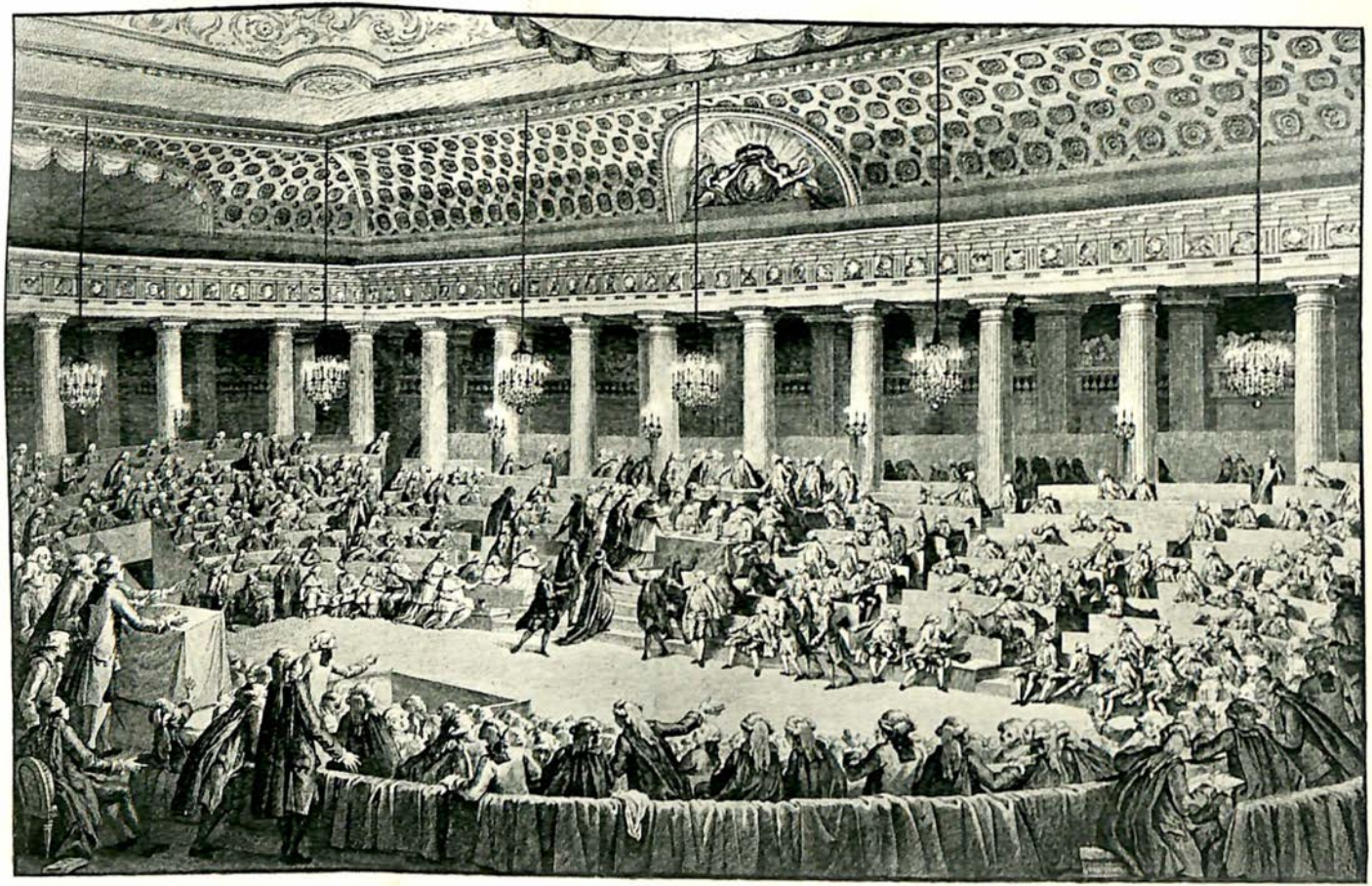
[1] The edition edited by Miss Betham-Edwards is the best.

scenes in the history of France took place. Until the psychology of crowds is more clearly understood, the "night of sacrifices" at the Assembly is likely to lack an explanation, especially as it arose during a debate on what measures should be taken to make the people pay their taxes. "Miraculous, or semi-miraculous, some seem to think it," says Carlyle. Within a few hours feudalism was abolished and equality proclaimed, in theory at any rate. The privileged orders became, perhaps unconsciously, the most violent of revolutionists. The Vicomte de Noailles proposed that the weight of taxation should be borne proportionately by all, that some of the feudal claims should be suppressed and others redeemed, that seignorial *corvées* and personal services hitherto rendered by the peasants should end. He was followed by the Duc d'Aiguillon, who boldly declared that the violent measures of the people of the provinces, while they were to be deprecated, "may still find excuse in those vexations of which the people are still the victims." The proprietors of the fiefs and seignories were seldom to be blamed, "but their agents are often without pity, and the unhappy cultivator groans under the barbarous remains of those feudal laws which still exist in France." Such rights were property, which is sacred, but burdensome to the people. It was for those who worked for the regeneration of the State, he added, to prove to their fellow-citizens that their intention and wish was to anticipate their desires, "and to establish, as soon as we can, that equality of rights which ought to exist amongst all men, and which can alone assure to them their freedom." He did not ask for the renunciation of feudal rights without compensation, but according to terms to be decided by the Assembly.

A great deal of enthusiasm was aroused by the Duke's

seconding of the Viscount's proposal, but a thunder of applause followed the speech of Leguen de Kérangal, a Breton deputy who was clad in the picturesque costume of the peasant. He gave a lurid account of men tied to the plough, and of men beating the ponds lest the croaking of the frogs should disturb my lord's slumbers. "Who is there in an enlightened age like this," he demanded, "that would not make an expiatory bonfire of these infamous parchments, who that would not seize a torch and offer them up as a sacrifice on the altar of the public good? There is no peace for France until there is an end of these things. Tell the people that you acknowledge the injustice of these rights acquired in times of ignorance and darkness. You have not a moment to lose. The fall of empires has often been announced by less noise than you now hear. Do you mean to give laws to France only when in a state of devastation?"

The nobles were followed by the clergy, the clergy by the Third Estate. "Everyone," Dumont says, "hastened forward to lay a sacrifice on the altar of the country by denuding himself or someone else. There was not a moment for reflection; a sort of sentimental contagion swept away every heart." Proposals were made for the abolition of the game laws, the rights of the chase, military pensions, the *casuel*, the *gabelle*, the *aides*. It was suggested that offices in the Church, the army, and the Civil Service should be open to all, that tithes should be commuted, that the nation had the right to dispose of ecclesiastical property. A decree of nineteen articles embodying these various reforms was drawn up by a committee, and as tithes were held to come under the designation of feudal vassalage they were abolished, notwithstanding the fierce denunciation of the Abbé Siéyès. The clergy assumed the position of salaried officials, and



THE ABANDONMENT OF PRIVILEGES AT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AT THE SITTING ON THE NIGHT OF THE 4TH OF AUGUST 1789

(Engraved by Helman after Charles Monnet, Painter to the King)

although an indemnity was promised to the parish priests it was never paid. "They wish to be free," said Siéyès, "and they cannot be just." "My dear Abbé," Mirabeau answered, "you have let loose the bull, and now you wonder that he should make use of his horns."

Étienne Dumont, one of the most active supporters of Mirabeau, furnishes us with a vivacious description of what he terms "the nocturnal sitting of the 4th of August." "Never," he writes, "was so much business got through in so few hours. That which ought to have occupied the care and meditation of years was proposed, discussed, put to the vote, and carried by general acclamation. I know not how many laws were enacted: the abolition of feudal rights, the abolition of tithes, the abolition of the privileges of the provinces—three articles which alone comprehended an entire system of jurisprudence and civil polity, were decided on, along with ten or a dozen more, in less time than the first reading of a single Bill of ordinary importance would have claimed from the Parliament of England. One would have said that the Assembly conducted itself like a dying man, who makes his will in a hurry; or, to speak more accurately, everybody gave liberally what did not belong to him, and distinguished himself by being generous at the expense of others."

Dumont adds that "a general effervescence" was excited in the house by the remarks of D'Aiguillon, Noailles, "and others of the minority of the *noblesse*." "Adieu to all reflection and calculation! Each rushed forward to propose some new sacrifice, to heap some fresh offering on the altar of his country, to strip himself or to despoil others; no pause, no objection, no time for thought —a sentimental contagion had seized on every heart. This renunciation of all privileges, the abandonment of so

many valuable and long-descended rights, these multiplied sacrifices had a certain air of magnanimity which made one forget the indecency of this heat and precipitation, so little suited to the character of legislators. I saw that night good worthy deputies who wept for joy in finding business advance at such a rate, and their utmost hopes exceeded, at every new spring of the endemic enthusiasm. It is, however, true that all were not hurried away in the prevailing sentiment. The member who felt himself ruined by one proposition which had been unanimously adopted took his revenge by making another which ensured him companions in calamity. . . ."

Dumont's concluding remarks regarding the night of sacrifices are valuable as showing the point of view of a contemporary which must have had its counterpart in the minds of many others besides the Genevese author of the *Souvenirs sur Mirabeau*. The decrees stopped neither brigandage nor violence, but "afforded the populace the finishing evidence of their strength, and convinced them that all their outrages on the nobles would at least remain unpunished—if even they were not rewarded. I repeat, that which men do out of fear never attains its object. Those whom you think to disarm by concessions only redouble their confidence and audacity."

It was decreed that a medal be struck to commemorate the night of the 4th August 1789. The obverse bore the head and shoulders of "*Louis XVI Restaurateur de la Liberté Française*," to quote the inscription, and the reverse represented the deputies sacrificing their privileges on the altar of their country. The wording is, "*Abandon de tous les privilèges. Assemblée Nationale, IV Août, MDCCLXXXIX.*" A solemn *Te Deum* was ordered to be chanted, and the title of "Restorer of French Liberty" was conferred on the King, although what Louis

had to do with this particular affair is not evident. Many gifts of money were also made to the Assembly by citizens and their wives for the relief of the poor and towards the extinguishing of the national debt.

Witty and cynical Horace Walpole, who regarded the Revolution with almost as much abhorrence as did Edmund Burke, and the horrors of which, according to his friend Miss Berry, "made him a Tory," anticipated what actually occurred. Writing on the 4th August, he states his conviction that "The *États Généraux* are, in my opinion, the most culpable. The King had restored their old constitution, which all France had so idolised; and he was ready to amend that constitution. But the *États*, with no sense, prudence, or temper, and who might have obtained a good government, and perhaps permanently, set out with such violence to overturn the whole frame, without its being possible to replace it at once with a sound model entirely new, and the reverse of every law and custom of their whole country, have deposed not only their King, but, I should think, their own authority; for they are certainly now *trembling before the populace*, and have let loose havoc through every province, which sooner or later will end in worse despotism than that they have demolished."

On the 7th of the same month Necker broached the subject of finance. As was expected, he gave a dismal account of the misfortunes of the country. "Desolation covers a part of France, terror the whole," due in his opinion to "the total subversion of the police and of all regular authority." He called upon men of property to unite and save the State. The deficit in the revenue amounted to some 200,000,000 *livres*; a loan of 30,000,000 *livres* was incumbent. He proposed that the latter should bear interest at five per cent.; the

Finance Committee advised that it be reduced to four and a half per cent. The issue was floated at the lower figure, and to all practical intents and purposes was boycotted. Towards the end of August the Idol of the Nation sought permission to raise a loan of 80,000,000 *livres* at five per cent., but only a little over a half was subscribed. Thus matters went from bad to worse, and the State drew nearer and nearer to bankruptcy.

The constitution was now proceeded with in earnest. In the early days of July a preliminary committee had issued its first report. It regarded it as an essential that a Declaration of the Rights of Man—in other words, of the individual citizen—should precede the principles of government, a suggestion made in many of the *cahiers*, as a second committee appointed for the purpose of examining them very soon discovered. This important document, which is seldom quoted in general histories of the French Revolution, was accepted on the 27th August 1789. It runs as follows:—

"The representatives of the French people, organised as a National Assembly, believing that the ignorance, neglect, or contempt of the rights of man are the sole causes of public calamities, and of the corruption of governments, have determined to set forth in a solemn declaration, the natural, inalienable, and sacred rights of man, in order that this declaration, being constantly before all the members of the social body, shall remind them continually of their rights and duties; in order that the acts of the legislative power, as well as those of the executive power, may be compared at any moment with the ends of all political institutions and may thus be more respected; and, lastly, in order that the grievances of the citizens, based hereafter upon simple and incontestable principles, shall tend to the maintenance of the

constitution and redound to the happiness of all. Therefore, the National Assembly recognises and proclaims in the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being the following rights of man and of the citizen:

"ARTICLE 1. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions may only be founded upon the general good.

"2. The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.

"3. The essence of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation. No body nor individual may exercise any authority which does not proceed directly from the nation.

"4. Liberty consists in the freedom to do everything which injures no one else; hence the exercise of the natural rights of each man has no limits except those which assure to the other members of society the enjoyment of the same rights. These limits can only be determined by law.

"5. Law can only prohibit such actions as are hurtful to society. Nothing may be prevented which is not forbidden by law, and no one may be forced to do anything not provided for by law.

"6. Law is the expression of the general will. Every citizen has a right to participate personally, or through his representative, in its enactment. It must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. All citizens, being equal in the eyes of the law, are equally eligible to all dignities and to all public positions and occupations, according to their abilities and without distinction, except that of their virtues and talents.

"7. No person shall be accused, arrested, or im-

prisoned except in the cases and according to the forms prescribed by law. Any one soliciting, transmitting, executing, or causing to be executed any arbitrary order shall be punished. But any citizen summoned or arrested in virtue of the law shall submit without delay, as resistance constitutes an offence.

"8. The law shall provide for such punishments only as are strictly and obviously necessary, and no one shall suffer punishment except it be legally inflicted in virtue of a law, passed and promulgated before the commission of the offence.

"9. As all persons are held innocent until they shall have been declared guilty, if arrest shall be deemed indispensable, all severity not essential to the securing of the prisoner's person shall be severely repressed by law.

"10. No one shall be disquieted on account of his opinions, including his religious views, provided their manifestation does not disturb the public order established by law.

"11. The free communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man. Every citizen may, accordingly, speak, write, and print with freedom, but shall be responsible for such abuses of this freedom as shall be defined by law.

"12. The security of the rights of man and of the citizen requires public military force. These forces are, therefore, established for the good of all, and not for the personal advantage of those to whom they shall be entrusted.

"13. A common contribution is essential for the maintenance of the public forces and for the cost of administration. This should be equitably distributed among all the citizens in proportion to their means.

"14. All citizens have a right to decide, either person-

ally or through their representatives, as to the necessity of the public contribution; to grant this freely; to know to what uses it is put; and to fix the amount, the mode of assessment and of collection, and the duration of the taxes.

"15. Society has the right to require of every public agent an account of his administration.

"16. A society in which the observance of the law is not assured, nor the separation of powers defined, has no constitution at all.

"17. Since property is an inviolable and sacred right, no one shall be deprived thereof except in cases where public necessity, legally determined, shall clearly require it, and then only on condition that the owner shall have been previously and equitably indemnified."

Various opinions have been expressed by modern historians on the Declaration of Rights.[1] Professor Montague calls it "a curious mixture of law, morals, and philosophy." Dr. J. Holland Rose admits that the "'Rights of Man' seemed to summon all peoples to a new political life." Professor Paul Viollet particularly emphasises the fact that articles 1 and 10 were "directly inspired" by America, the first by the Declaration of the Rights of Massachusetts (1779–80), and in a minor degree by documents having a similar purport and issued by Pennsylvania (1776) and Virginia (1776), the second by the Bill of Rights of New Hampshire (1784).

"Do not these 'principles of 1789' represent the most commonplace assumptions of European Governments to-day?" asks Professor James Harvey Robinson.[2] "And yet every one of them was neglected by every European Government in the eighteenth century, if we except Eng-

[1] See *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. viii., pp. 201, 556, 728, 749.

[2] *The New History* (New York, 1912), p. 232.

land. M. Seignobos reminds us that 'when a Frenchman turned his attention to political questions in the eighteenth century, most of the institutions in the midst of which he lived appeared to him to be *abuses* contrary to reason and humanity.' Now, if we are not prejudiced against the Declaration of the Rights of Man by careless and hostile critics, and by the suggestions made during the debates by Siéyès and others—which certainly reached a degree of fatuity rarely exceeded in the most futile of parliamentary discussions—and if we neglect one or two oratorical flourishes, do we not find it to be, after all, simply a dignified and succinct repudiation of *les abus?* Is it not a concrete and positive, although general, statement of the practical reforms which the Assembly was in duty bound to realise? Was there not back of each article some crying evil of long standing, in view of which the nation might expect a comprehensive constitutional guaranty?"

Having enunciated certain principles, the next item on the programme, and assuredly the more difficult, was to embody them in a constitution. Weeks were spent in discussions, oftentimes carried on in an uproar, but eventually several preliminary matters were decided. The legislative body should be permanent and consist of a single chamber only, and the King should not have the right of absolute veto as hitherto. He could use his prerogative for two sessions, but no longer—a compromise engineered by Necker.

It is now that definite parties begin to form in the Assembly. The Right, so called because its members sat on the right hand of the President's chair, was the party of reaction and obstruction, supporters of the throne and of the Church, such as Cazalès and the Abbé Maury. The ultra-conservative amongst them were known as the

Extreme Right, and included D'Espréménil and Mirabeau's brother, while the Right Centre was a half-way house which had as guests Malouet, Bergasse, Lally-Tollendal, and Clermont-Tonnerre. Those opposite to them represented radicalism, and were known as the Left. The Extreme Left comprised Robespierre, Buzot, Pétion, and Dubois-Crancé, the Left proper Duport, Barnave, Alexandre Lameth, Talleyrand, and the Abbé Grégoire.

There was no mention of a republic as yet, but France was already fast losing her faith in the King.

CHAPTER XVIII

A BANQUET AT VERSAILLES AND ITS SEQUEL

"Who can regulate the impulse of a great people when once put in motion?"
MADAME DE STAËL.

THE question of the royal veto caused a tremendous agitation throughout the country. Siéyès termed it a "*lettre de cachet* against the will of the nation." The Palais Royal, a revolutionary centre of constantly-growing importance, threatened to let loose an army of men for the purpose of burning the houses of deputies who maintained that the King's prerogative was a safeguard against possible tyranny. Newspapers and pamphlets continued to agitate; lies about the wanton waste of the *noblesse* were propagated with sedulous care. Deputations waited on the Assembly to assure the legislators that if Louis were given the absolute veto the country would sink into despotism of the worst possible character. Thus intimidated, the legislators were able to bring anything but a clear and dispassionate mind to bear on the subject of their deliberations. In vain Mirabeau told his fellow constitution-makers that he would "rather live in Constantinople than in Paris if laws could be made in France without the royal sanction." His courage seems to have failed him when his opinion was put to the test, for he did not vote at the final division on the 11th September. Four of the deputies who had served on the committee charged with the drawing-up of the constitution, men who at least were true to their convictions on this occasion, resigned when the result of the voting was made known.

They were Mounier, Lally-Tollendal, Bergasse, and Clermont-Tonnerre. A new committee, which included Talleyrand, Siéyès, and Le Chapelier, who had filled positions in its predecessor, together with Thouret, Target, Tronchet, Rabaut-Saint-Étienne, and Desmeuniers continued the work.

Although Paris was still in a ferment, Lafayette and the National Guard had succeeded in dispersing various seditious meetings and in restoring something approaching a feeling of security to the citizens, although bread was daily getting scarcer, and the people were beginning to tire of the indecision of Versailles. Empty or half-empty stomachs, combined with an ugly rumour that Louis intended flight—in actual fact some of his advisers, including Marie Antoinette, endeavoured to persuade him to do so—and the appearance of the *Régiment de Flandres* at Versailles, apparently to assist him in his intention, or perhaps to overturn the Assembly, were sufficient to inflame the hungry populace. Why had the King taken so long to assent to the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the abolition of feudal dues? they asked; and, more important than either, Why had the newly-arrived regiment been fêted?

There was really not the slightest need for uneasiness had the mob stopped to think, but mobs never ponder pros and cons, and that is why they are apt to do such mad things. They had some idea, and it was certainly not an altogether unreasonable one, that if the royal family could be persuaded to take up their residence in Paris, their presence would be some guarantee that the city would not be left to starve. Likewise it would not be so easy for the King to escape, should he meditate such an action, which the majority assuredly believed was the case. The *Gardes du Corps* at Versailles merely carried

out a time-honoured custom, hitherto unobserved by them, it is true, when they entertained the newly-arrived Regiment of Flanders, the strength of which was swollen to mammoth proportions by the scaremongers and gossips of the capital. It totalled not more than 1100 men and a few guns. Undoubtedly there were indiscretions in the manner and matter of the coming of the troops and of the subsequent entertainment and its aftermath. There was plenty of pomp and circumstance connected with their arrival on the 23rd September which it would have been judicious to avoid, and it was deemed significant that the banquet on the 1st October was held in the Salle d'Hercule, an apartment associated with important State functions. That the officers of the National Guard stationed at Versailles were invited and fraternised with the semi-foreign officers of the Regiment of Flanders was further cause for agitation.

What had actually happened was this: A suitable hall not being available for the entertainment, leave had been granted to use the theatre in the palace. It was beautifully decorated for the occasion, and there is indirect evidence that part of the expenses was borne by the Court. It has been pointed out that while the hosts paid a sum equivalent to about five shillings a head, the dinner must have cost eight times that amount for each individual, exclusive of wine, two bottles of which were placed before each man. Successive feasts were given on the two following days to which the ordinary soldiers were invited. "There was a sound of revelry by night" on the 1st October 1789 as well as on the 15th June 1815.

It does not seem that either the King or the Queen had seriously entertained the thought of putting in an appearance at the festivities. According to Rocheterie, a lady-in-waiting suggested that it would gratify the little Dauphin

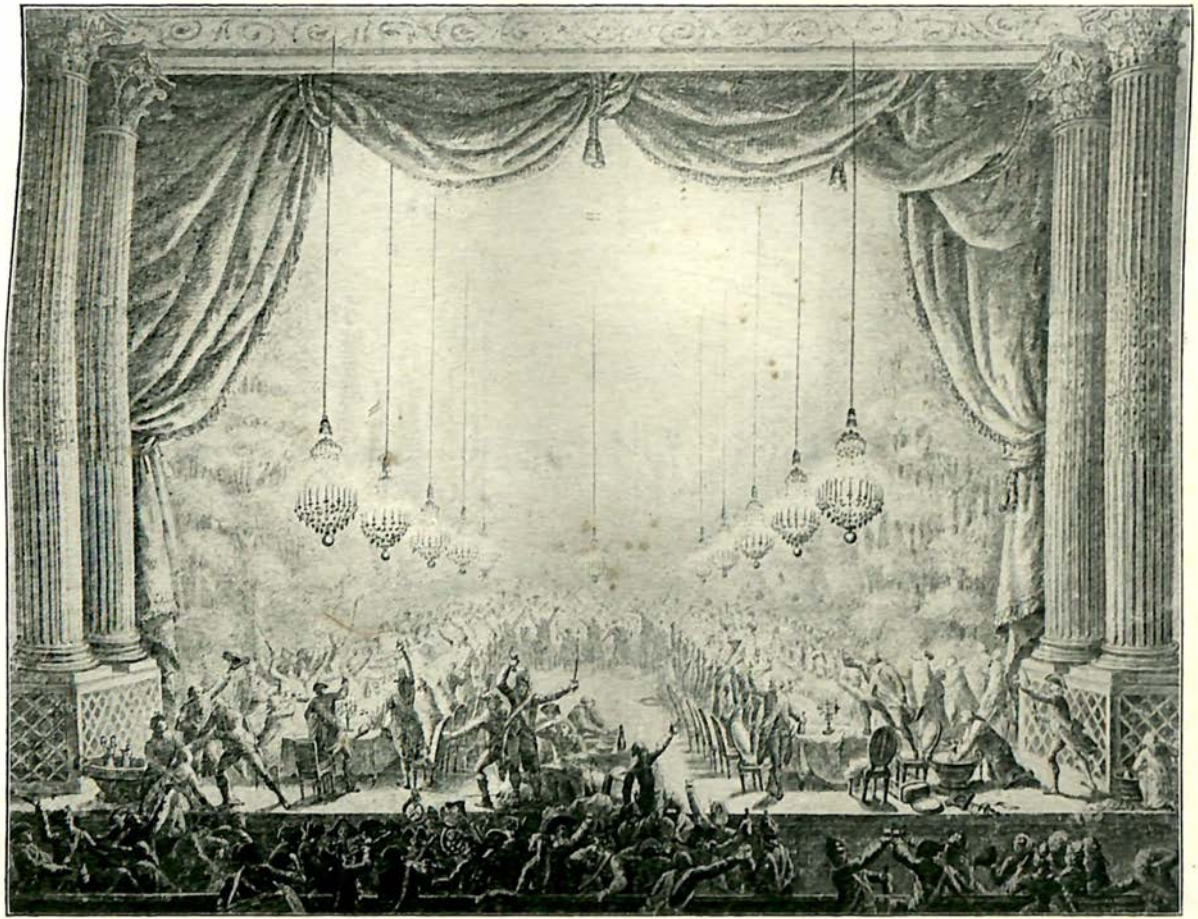


Photo Giraudon

THE "ORGY" OF THE GARDE DU CORPS IN THE OPERA HALL AT VERSAILLES, OCTOBER 1, 1789

(*From the original drawing by Prieur in the Louvre*)

if he were shown the brilliant spectacle. The Queen, low-spirited and the victim of a hundred terrible thoughts, consented, and it is more than likely that she welcomed the respite as a means of forgetting her anxieties for a few brief minutes. Louis, who had been indulging in the traditional sport of the Bourbons, notwithstanding the crisis through which he and the nation were passing, joined them booted and spattered with mud. Together they entered the royal box. Their appearance was made the occasion of a fervid outburst of loyalty. Cries of "*Vive le Roi! Vive la Reine! Vive Monsieur le Dauphin!*" were repeated again and again. They then walked round the tables. The orchestra struck up *O Richard, O mon Roi, l'univers t'abandonne*—O Richard, O my King, by the world forgotten—from Gretry's *Richard Cœur de Lion*, which had been played at the Théâtre Italien a few months before, and the troops sang it with boisterous enthusiasm. According to some writers, it was not until after the royal family had left that the Guards, walking to the Cour de Marbre, tore off the white cockades of the Bourbons and gave them to the officers of the National Guard. Others say that ladies of the Court made cockades of white paper and threw them down from the boxes, which makes it easy to believe that the guests donned them from a sense of chivalry. FitzGerald, writing to the Duke of Leeds, asserts that "in the height of imprudence and mistaken zeal they all tore the national cockade from their hats and trampled them underfoot, with many oaths against all those who wore them and whom they considered as traitors to the King. The Garde du Corps supplied themselves with black cockades [for the Queen] in the room of those they had thrown away in such disdain, and this circumstance . . . however trifling it sounds, was of lamentable consequence, and proved the ruin of that fine corps of men.

The news of this day soon reached Paris, and general ill-humour spread visibly throughout."

Since the 14th July the district of the Cordeliers, perhaps the most democratic of the sixty, had met daily and secured a large following. Its guiding spirit was Danton, "the typical figure," as Hilaire Belloc terms him, "of the Revolution in action." The dinner at Versailles was given on a Thursday, and on the following Sunday placards emanating from the Cordeliers and urging an insurrection appeared in conspicuous places. This was not difficult, for there had been considerable commotion about the Palais Royal on the previous day. Early on Monday morning the tocsin was rung in the district, and the district battalion turned out. A huge concourse of women had already gathered in the Porte Saint-Antoine, determined to carry a petition to the King because they had been given rice instead of bread. A young woman secured a drum and made an unholy din as she passed through the streets shouting "Bread! Bread! To Versailles!" Men, women, and children speedily gathered, and the motley army marched to the Hôtel de Ville. They demanded to see Bailly, but neither the mayor nor the permanent committee had entered upon their work for the day. Maillard, who had been present at the siege of the Bastille, happened to be there, and seeing a golden opportunity of further distinguishing himself, placed himself at the head of the mob with the intention of marching to the National Assembly. Many of the people had provided themselves with whatever weapons they could put their hands on, and preceded by two unloaded cannon—presumably to give the necessary military touch to their ragged array—set out on the twelve miles' walk that separated Paris from Versailles. Their strength was probably between five and six thousand, increased by enthusiastic

recruits as they tramped along, the rain driving in their faces, bedraggling the skirts of the wretched women, and giving an added feeling of misery to the whole. Maillard, for all his initial boldness, urged pacific measures, but wine shops were sacked, and when drink gets to empty stomachs there is no telling what may happen. They entered the hall of the Assembly, which had resounded that day to a discussion on the scarcity of food in Paris, the qualified accession of the King to the decrees of the Rights of Man and the extinction of feudal dues. Mirabeau had made a subtle thrust at the Queen's influence over her august husband. "Let it be expressly declared," he had exclaimed, "that whosoever is not king is a subject and responsible, and I will speedily furnish proofs." "We have come to Versailles," said Maillard, "to demand bread, and at the same time to punish the insolent Body Guards who have dared to insult the national colours. We are good patriots, and have destroyed all the black and white cockades which we have met on the road. The aristocrats would have us die of famine. . . ." It was decided that Mounier, who then occupied the position of President, should accompany a small deputation to the King.

The Swiss Guards, Body Guards, Dragoons, and the Regiment of Flanders, informed of the coming of the mob, had already stationed themselves about the palace. It was impossible for all the women and those who had joined them to find room in the Assembly, and they congregated in the Place d'Armes. As was almost inevitable, some of them came to blows with the troops, and a few were wounded. The King, who had returned from hunting when news reached him of the march upon Versailles, received the deputation with his invariable courtesy and good humour. He gave them an order for

the free circulation of corn, but omitted to sign it. Something like panic seized the throng when they were shown the paper, and those who had been in the King's presence were roughly handled and sent back, this time returning with the signature duly attached. The deputation made all speed for Paris; the rest remained.

Louis then held a meeting of the Council. We do not know exactly what took place, but it is generally understood that some of the King's advisers endeavoured to persuade him to fly to Metz, where a considerable body of troops under the command of the Marquis de Bouillé was stationed, and where he would have an opportunity to make plans for the re-conquest of his kingdom. The monarch was obdurate, and would not listen to any suggestion for the removal of the Queen and their children. Meanwhile Mounier waited for the unconditional acceptance by the monarch of the Declaration of Rights and the first nineteen Articles of the Constitution, for he had previously sanctioned them only on condition that the executive remained entirely in his hands. This was eventually given, but when Mounier returned to the Salle des États he found that most of the deputies had left. They had grown tired of waiting, and the public which thronged the hall had made the place so untenable that they had been glad to escape. The President did his best to appease them by securing what food he could obtain, which was eagerly devoured in the chamber. The municipality of Versailles also ordered rice to be cooked, and issued instructions that the bakers were to continue their work throughout the night. In an effort to allay the agitation of the people, the Body Guard was withdrawn. Mud, of which there was abundance, was flung at some of them, and shots were fired, fortunately without loss of life.

The municipality of Paris had done what it could to assuage both Court and people. It had sent messengers to Versailles to warn the former, and ordered detachments of the National Guard to secure corn from the country districts around the capital—instructions which were not obeyed, because a second crowd was already gathering in the Place de Grève intent on marching to the royal town. Lafayette, who was very popular, did his best to persuade them not to do so, but feeling that nothing he could say or do would deter them from their fixed purpose, he was given permission by the municipality to conduct the people to their desired haven.

With some 20,000 of the National Guard, two representatives of the municipality, and a more or less orderly mob, the commander set off when the hour hands of the clocks of Paris were moving towards six. It took them between four and five hours to traverse the muddy roads. Without unnecessary delay Lafayette and his two colleagues of the municipality were given an audience by the King. The commander had unlimited faith in his "army," who at his request had taken an oath to be faithful to the monarch and to respect the palace. He suggested that the majority of the regular troops might be withdrawn and the exterior posts given to the National Guard, which was done. Having seen that all was secure, and fondly imagining that the storm was spent, Lafayette, worn out by an exceedingly arduous day, retired to rest for a few brief hours. The Queen had long since gone to her apartment in the southern wing; the King also slept. The crowd had dispersed, to find shelter where it could. Versailles was tranquil.

Some of the women were awake early and began to gather in the Place d'Armes. The rain had ceased and the wind fallen. A gate leading into the Cour des

Ministres stood open, and with the curiosity which is alleged to be a predominant feature of the sex, they passed through, undeterred by the sentry of the National Guard. A handful of women could have done little harm, but they were soon joined by a horde of ruffians armed with crude weapons and apparently under the "command" of a man named Jourdan. They reached the Cour Royale, where one of the Body Guard, alarmed at the mob, endeavoured to prevent its further progress. He dare not draw his sword, for Louis had ordered that no blood should be spilt. He was speedily overpowered, and, together with another soldier who tried to stop the invaders at the top of the marble staircase, was dragged to the Place d'Armes and killed. When the motley array came to Marie Antoinette's apartments, one of the Guards opened a door and shouted to her Majesty's maid to "Save the Queen." His act was seen, and he received a blow which was within an ace of ending his days. The frenzied men and women gradually forced their way, but the Queen and her attendants managed, with extreme difficulty, to reach the King's bedroom, he having meanwhile rushed along the secret passage which connected the two apartments and found it empty. He returned to his *chambre à coucher* to find all the family gathered there. The mob was now outside the Œil-de-Bœuf; the Body Guard and three rooms alone separated it from the persons they sought. Fortunately the yelling which seems the natural accompaniment of a crowd had been heard by a detachment of the National Guard made up of the old *Gardes Françaises* posted near the palace. They marched to the point of danger, and with the troops cleared the château. Lafayette was not far behind, and with a party of grenadiers rescued some of the troops which were being roughly handled in the Square.

He then made his way to the King, who had already summoned a conference with his Ministers.

All was not over, although the people had been worsted in the encounter. In the Cour de Marbre they were yelling for the King to show himself. He stepped out on to the centre balcony overlooking the courtyard, accompanied by Lafayette, and was cheered again and again. Now they demanded the Queen, and ugly words were used. If she presented herself, it was quite possible that a fanatic would attempt her life; if she did not, the mob might think that she had escaped and make a second effort to force its way to the apartment. "No children!" was the ugly greeting she received when she appeared with the little Dauphin and his sister. The youngsters ran back into the room. She stood alone without flinching, her hands grasping the balustrade, her eyes bent on the seething mass below. It was both pathetic and dramatic, and it appeased the mob. A minute or so passed, and then Lafayette stepped on to the balcony, knelt on one knee, and kissed her right hand. He had saved the situation. Shouts of "*Vive la Reine! Vive Lafayette!*" went up. A little later the French hero of the War of Independence reappeared with one of the Body Guards, whom he embraced and decorated with his bandolier. His triumph was complete.

Again the people became dissatisfied. They burst out, "To Paris! To Paris!" Louis rose from his seat in the *cabinet du conseil*, where he was discussing the question of his removal with Necker, Lafayette, and a few others, and appeared on the balcony for the second time on that fateful day. "My friends," he cried in a clear voice, "I go to Paris with my wife and children. To the love of my good and faithful subjects I entrust my most precious possessions."

"How can one explain this new move on the King's part?" asks the Comte d'Espinchal, a royalist *émigré*. "Only an hour earlier he had behaved with great courage, and had made all arrangements for defending the palace. He knew himself to be surrounded by faithful servants; he could count upon the Swiss, and even, if he chose to take a decided line, on some of the National Guards. Yet he went out to face humiliations of every kind, to incur inevitable dangers, and to put himself at the mercy of his worst enemies. It was almost certain, moreover, that his actions must entail the death of the handful of brave men who had sworn to defend him, for their sentiments were not fluctuating nor easily disguisable, like those of the National Guard. The same fate, too, seemed likely to befall the Queen's ladies, the waiting-women, and the other servants! It is deeply distressing—it wrings the heart—to inquire too deeply into our unfortunate Sovereign's inexplicable character. It is unique in the long line of kings that have governed an ancient monarchy, and, indeed, I doubt if the world has ever seen its like."

The stormy dawn had subsided. The Father of his People was returning to the capital which the fourteenth Louis had shunned for the stately palace and gardens of Versailles. The Queen, with the intuition of her sex, was not to be deceived by the lumbering cannon which the women had decorated with greenery, the threescore waggons of grain which formed a conspicuous feature of the queer procession, nor the loaves of bread which were distributed to the National Guard and many of the women. Before setting out she had endeavoured to exact from her husband a promise that when next his subjects foisted their unwelcome attentions on him he would "fly while yet there is time."

She received no such promise.

If the Comtesse de Boigne is to be relied upon as a witness, and there is every reason for doing so because her father was concerned in the matter, it had been arranged that Louis and his family should go to Rambouillet on the night of the 6th October. It was the Comte de Saint-Priest, Minister of the King's Household in Necker's previous administration, who informed De Boigne of the change of plans. "My friend," he said, "M. Necker has won the day, and the King and the monarchy are alike ruined."

"The King's departure for Rambouillet had been decided," the Comtesse states in her *Memoirs*, "but the orders for the carriages had been given with all the full formalities usually in force. The rumour had thus gone abroad. The grooms had hesitated to harness the horses, the coachmen to drive them. The populace had gathered before the stables and refused to let the carriages out. M. Necker, informed of these facts, had gone to discuss them with the King, who was persuaded to stay rather by these obstacles than by the Minister's arguments. Though he was accustomed to ride twenty leagues while hunting, to go to Rambouillet on a troop horse would have seemed to him an inconceivable resource. There, as later at Varennes, the chance of safety had been destroyed by those habits of formality which had become second nature to the French royal family."

It was afternoon before the King, Queen, the royal children, Monsieur, Madame, and Princess Elizabeth entered the lumbering coach which was got ready for them. Other carriages followed containing many of the deputies of the National Assembly. The returning mob was met by a vast concourse of people marching from Paris to welcome the royal captives. "We shall not die of hunger now," was the sentiment and belief of the

poissardes, "for here is the baker, his wife, and the little apprentice."

This is how the journey was made according to Weber, who was at Versailles and rode on horseback close to the royal carriage. It must be remembered that he writes from the point of view of an ultra-royalist, which doubtless distorts his sense of proportion to some extent, but there is certainly more fact than fiction in his account:

"First went the main body of the Parisians," he relates, "each soldier with a loaf on his bayonet; then came the *poissardes*, drunk with fury, exultation, and wine, astride on the cannons, mounted on the horses of the Body Guard, surrounded by the brigands and workmen who had come from Paris; waggons of flour and grain formed a convoy, followed by the grenadiers, who still kept under their protection the Body Guard, whose lives had been purchased by the King; these captives were led, one by one, disarmed, bare-headed, and on foot, some of them with the grenadier caps instead of their hats; the dragoons, the soldiers of the Regiment of Flanders, and the hundred Swiss Guards then surrounded the carriage of the King, where were seated his Majesty, the royal family, and the governess. It would be difficult to describe the confusion and tediousness of a procession like this, which lasted six hours: it began with a general discharge of musketry at Versailles; halts were made from time to time to give opportunity for new salutes: the *poissardes* on these occasions descended from the cannons and the horses, to dance around the carriage of the King, and to sing their songs. But the horror of this dreadful day, cold and rainy as it was; this infamous soldiery, wading in the mud; these harpies, these monsters in human form; and in the middle of his captive Guards a monarch dragged

THE RETURN OF THE "HEROINES OF PARIS" AFTER THE EXPEDITION TO VERSAILLES, OCTOBER 5, 1789

(*From an aquatint of the year in the Bibliothèque Nationale*)

along thus ignominiously with his family, altogether formed a spectacle so terrible, a mixture of every possible affliction and shame so piteous, that my imagination cannot to this hour recall the remembrance without an almost instant oversetting and annihilation of my faculties. No idea can be formed of all that was said and uttered by the populace as we went along. For three parts of the whole time I kept myself at the right door of the carriage, and their Majesties had the goodness to express to me, by their gestures and their eyes cast up to heaven, their profound astonishment at the state to which the people had descended."

Bailly, as on another celebrated occasion, presented to Louis the keys of his "good town of Paris." After proceeding to the Hôtel de Ville to show themselves, the royal family were allowed to enter the Tuileries. The great place was all but totally unprepared, and had not been inhabited by royalty since the majority of Louis XV. Monsieur and Madame took up their residence at the Luxembourg. "This is an ugly place," murmured the Dauphin. "Louis the Fourteenth thought it good enough for him," replied his mother.

On the following day the gardens of the Tuileries were crowded with people anxious to see their Majesties, and those members of the Paris *Parlement* who had remained in the capital presented their respects to them. Pasquier was one of the representatives of this nearly obsolete body who made their way to the palace, and his quick sympathy was touched by the growing misfortunes of Louis and his consort: "It seemed that ten years had passed over their heads in the space of ten days."

The appearance of the household was "cast-down and disheartened"; of the National Guards, "haughty and triumphant"; and there was evidence of confusion. "The

King's face," he says, "bore the imprint of resignation. He understood that he had not reached the end of his misfortunes. Indignation shone through the Queen's grief, which displayed somewhat more firmness. Her son was sitting in her lap, and in spite of the courage of which she had given so many heroic proofs during the past forty-eight hours, one could not but feel that that son was for her a safeguard to the protection of which she committed herself. When she received us, it was plainly to be read in her eyes that she clearly saw in ours to what an extent the sorrowful congratulations which we brought were in contradiction to the feelings of our innermost hearts, and how we suffered at having to speak those meaningless sentences, consecrated by usage in days of happiness, and at not being able to speak others."

The 8th October was given up to the reception of foreign Ministers. "The Palace," says one who was there, "seemed in the utmost disorder, was crowded with all sorts of people without distinction, and the dignity of Majesty was confounded in the chaos. The King was much dejected and said little. Her Majesty's voice faltered, and the tears ran fast down her cheeks as she spoke, and all their attendants seemed impressed with the deepest melancholy and concern: during this time . . . altho' the second day since their arrival, the gardens were still thronged with people, and nothing was heard but repeated screams and shouting, and, from the marked pain and distress on the countenance of all the Court, I do not doubt but that they all, from what they had so lately experienced at Versailles, considered themselves in a most precarious situation and by no means secure from popular violence—which, indeed, it is impossible for anybody to say they are. The people pressed so thickly this day on all sides the Palace that Mons. de La Fayette judged proper

to post strong guards of *Milice Nationale* and cannon at the chief entries and gateways. . . .

"In a few days . . . we may be better able to judge how matters will turn out, which at present it is impossible to see, as the blind and headlong will of the populace directs all, and all submit with fear and trembling to their government, as the dangerous maxims that all men are equal, and that numbers can overcome a few, are in the mouth of every vagabond at present. Nothing is now left to the superior class of people but submission, and the well-proportioned exercise of that policy, reason, and education, which may in time give them again the superiority over the multitude." The same informant notes a week later that although it was the tenth day since the arrival of Louis, he had not so much as taken a stroll in the garden, "as it is constantly crowded with people, and suffered to remain a thoroughfare."

Already the revolution had made vast strides. Within five months the States-General, with three Orders, called primarily to discuss the question of finance, had become the National Assembly with a single chamber. It had practically superseded the *Parlements*, destroyed what remained of feudalism, voted itself permanent, and begun constitution-making. Following the fall of the Bastille on the 14th July, it had demanded the withdrawal of the troops about Paris and the formation of a civic guard, to both of which Louis had agreed after having given his refusal. It had expressed its disapproval of Necker's dismissal, and the King had yielded to its wishes and requested the return of the popular Minister. A municipality had been brought into being in Paris without authority, and received the royal approval. Finally the mob had not only secured the person of Louis in the capital, but also the Assembly, which had passed a resolution on the

motion of Mirabeau that it was inseparable from the monarch. The deputies, interrupted and coerced, flattered or threatened whenever measures did not happen to meet with the approval of the people who thronged their meeting-place in the riding-school of the Tuileries, gradually became permeated with democratic opinions. As the method of voting was by standing or sitting—the former indicated in favour, the latter against—and on occasion by word of mouth, those who repeatedly vetoed popular measures speedily became "marked men," and doubtless many a deputy cast his vote against his conscience. The names of those who voted in opposition to the democratic side were posted up at the Palais Royal and elsewhere whenever possible.

"Happily," Camille Desmoulins admits in the *Lanterne*, "the incorruptible galleries are there which always stand on the side of the patriots. . . . They represent the capital, and, fortunately, the constitution is framed under the batteries of the capital."

Arthur Young makes some interesting comments on the method of proceeding in the States, and although his remarks are based on what he saw at Versailles, similar scenes took place when the Assembly removed to Paris. "The spectators," he says, "are allowed to interfere in the debates by clapping their hands, and other noisy expressions of approbation: this is grossly indecent: it is also dangerous; for, if they are permitted to express approbation, they are, by parity of reason, allowed expressions of dissent; and they may hiss as well as clap; which, it is said, they have sometimes done:—this would be, to overrule the debate and influence the deliberations. Another circumstance is the want of order among themselves; more than once to-day there were an hundred members on their legs at a time, and Mons. Bailly

absolutely without power to keep order. This arises very much from complex motions being admitted. . . ."

During a debate on the 8th April 1790, the deputies used such abusive language that the people pelted them with apples and oranges, and the guard had to be called in to clear the galleries. It was not long ere the Assembly was dominated by extremists.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CLUBS AND THE CHURCH

"A great error . . . was the unfortunate invention of a constitutional clergy. To exact from ecclesiastics an oath at variance with their conscience, and, on their refusing it, to prosecute them by the loss of a pension, and afterwards even to transportation, was to degrade those who took the oath, to which temporal advantages were attached." DE STAËL.

THE attack on Versailles rid France of at least one notorious undesirable, namely, the Duke of Orleans. Lafayette, who had very good reason for doing so, advised him to leave the country, and Louis, with a greater show of wisdom than he usually displayed, sent him on what was understood to be a private mission to England. Considering the infamous part he had played, it might have been expected that his disappearance would have "cleared the air," to use an expressive colloquial phrase. No doubt it did to a certain extent, but at the same time the numerous political clubs for the discussion of past and pending measures, some of which had been founded by deputies in the early days of the States-General, were becoming formidable. They sprang up with the rapidity of mushrooms, some to stay, others to disappear in a few months. For this and other reasons we find prominent men on the roll-calls of more than one club, either because they were members of several or had ceded at some time or other, perhaps to help in the organisation of a body that would represent more clearly their own political bias.

The foremost of these was the Breton Club. It was started, as its name indicates, by deputies from Brittany, who kept up a correspondence with committees in the

place they represented, and found it convenient to have a common meeting-ground. When the Assembly moved to Paris, this institution—for such it was—had of necessity to leave Versailles. On securing quarters in the refectory of the old convent of the Jacobins, quite close to the building occupied by the deputies, the members celebrated the occasion by taking on the more distinctive and important name of the Society of Friends of the Constitution. It speedily outgrew its semi-private nature, and eventually anybody who had six friends who were deputies could be proposed for membership. As it grew and became more powerful and more ambitious, a step was taken which had far-reaching results. The members decided that its work should be extended throughout France. Hundreds, and eventually thousands, of affiliated societies representing "the popular party" came into being. The Jacobin Club, as it was usually called, skilfully managed and ever on the alert, wielded immense influence, and we shall see that it eventually dominated the legislature. Among those who were members of it at some period of its existence were Lanjuinais, Mirabeau, Siéyès, the Abbé Grégoire, Condorcet, Laclos, Defermon, Rabaut-St.-Étienne, Robespierre, Buzot, Pétion, and Le Chapelier. Duport, Barnave, and the Lameths left the Jacobins in July 1791 and joined the newly-formed and more moderate Feuillant Club, which had a chequered career and a short life.

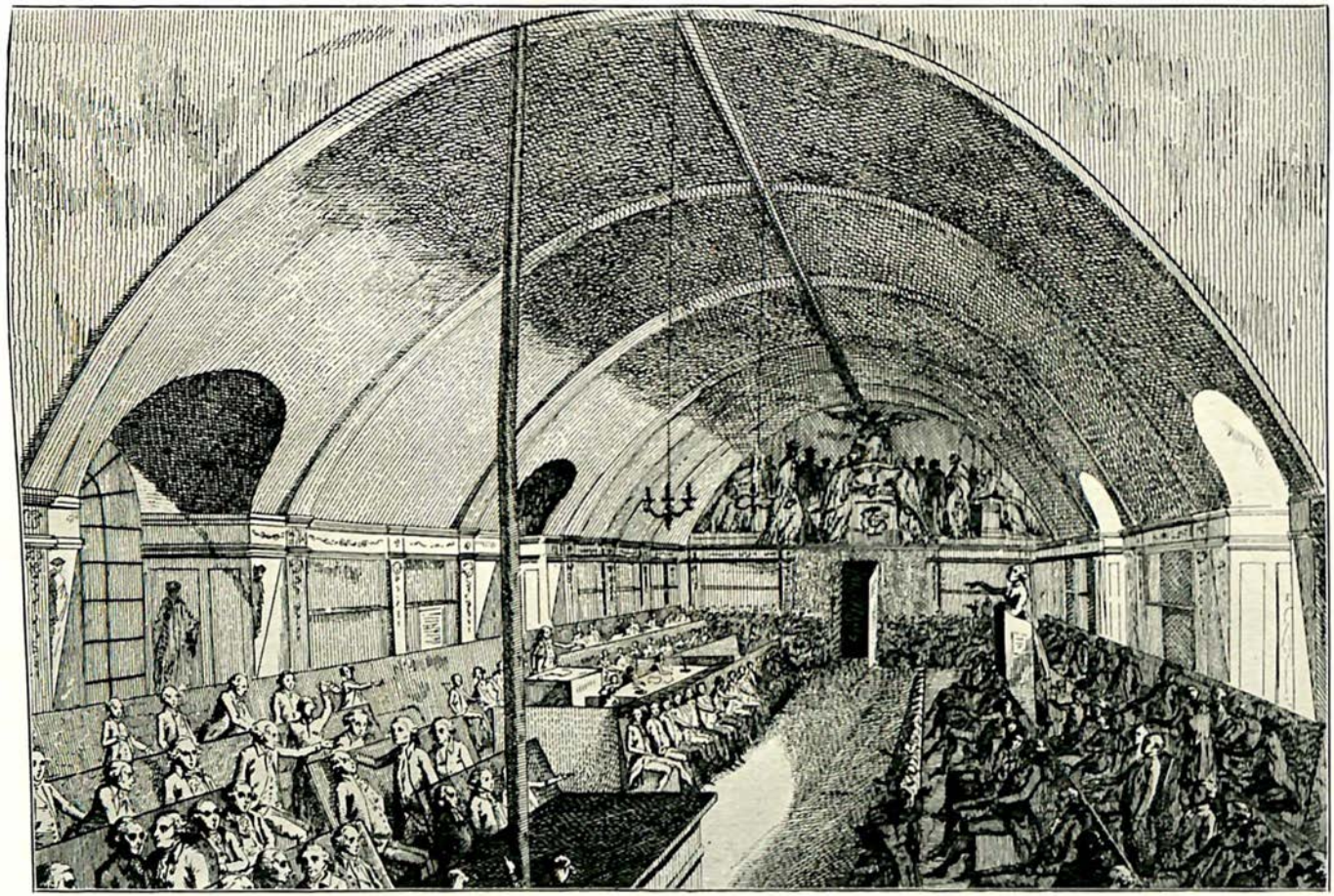
The *Club Montrouge* received its name from the place at which it met. It supported Orleans, and included amongst its members Mirabeau, Latouche, De Sillery, Siéyès, and Laclos. The *Club Monarchique*, established as the *Club des Impartiaux*, had some temporary success, and lasted from the autumn of 1789 until it was suppressed by the muncipality of Paris in the early days of 1791. It

was, of course, the common ground of the royalist party, and Mounier, Lally-Tollendal, Bergasse, and Malouet were members at some time of its existence. Although it sought to ingratiate itself in the favours of the lower classes by philanthropic measures such as the sale of bread below the market price, it signally failed to do so. Other institutions which supported the Right were the *Club de Valois* and the *Club de* 1789. In the latter, which had royal support and approval, were to be met such men as Lafayette, Siéyès, La Rochefoucauld, Le Chapelier, Bailly; and Mirabeau was President for a short time. Pasquier, who was attached to the *Valois*, admits that the deputies of the Left managed their affairs far better than their adversaries. In his opinion, "Everything, or nearly everything, was done by the party opposed to the Revolution in the excitement of the moment; nothing was the result of reasoning."

The Cordeliers Club, with the fiery Danton as President, came into being as the immediate result of the replacing of the districts by the sections in 1790. It was avowedly democratic, and very soon came to regard an hereditary monarch as incompatible with liberty. In the same year *La Société Fraternelle* was founded, and soon had many affiliated societies working in the Jacobin cause. Clubs frankly literary or philanthropic like the *Lycée* and the *Société des Amis des Noirs* took on a political complexion.[1] Even the lowest of the lower classes met together and discussed the affairs of the nation over glasses of cheap wine, but the leading personalities of the more important clubs were invariably men of education.

The Assembly continued its appointed task of spring-cleaning the State, a formidable business made a thousand times more complicated by the extraordinary way in which

[1] *A History of the French Revolution.* By H. Morse Stephens (London, 1886), vol. i. pp. 111-12.



A Meeting of the Jacobin Club—"The Society of the Friends of the Constitution"

(*Engraved by Aubry after Vangorp*)

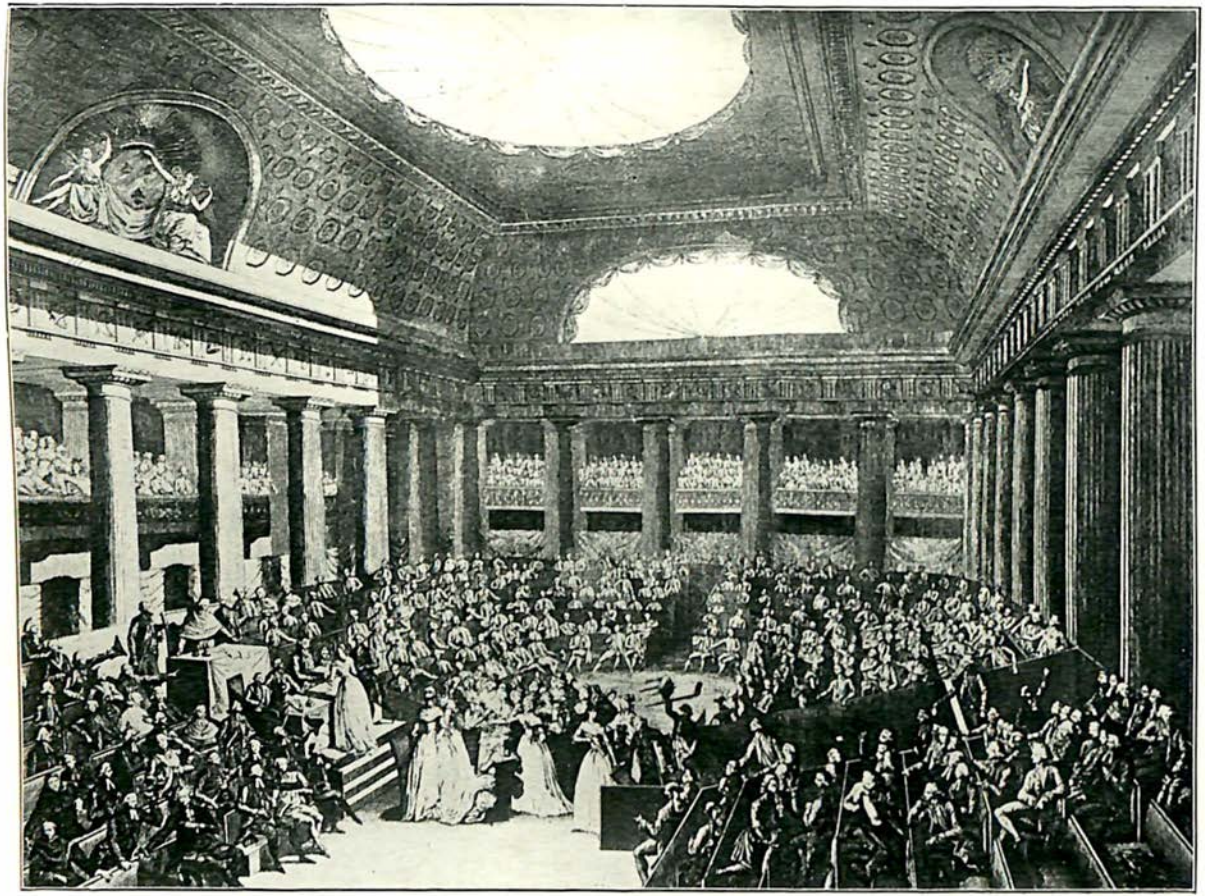
the various departments of the administration had each apportioned France for their separate purposes. Justice and finance, the army and the Church, had their separate divisions and independent administrations, and we have already noted the existence of customs barriers and of privileges such as trade guilds and merchants' companies. While these may have been useful in the long ago, they had gradually become antiquated and restrictive. They were abolished, and the export and import duties lightened. In January 1790 it was decreed, thanks largely to the Abbé Siéyès, that France should be divided into departments of practically the same size instead of provinces as hitherto, that these in turn should be made up of districts consisting of cantons, and the cantons into self-governing communes. These latter numbered no fewer than some 44,000 throughout France.

Of departments there were eighty-three, each with an administrative council of thirty-six members, who elected an executive directory of eight members. They served much the same purpose as our own County Councils. The districts, of which there were 374 in all, were miniature replicas of the departments. The cantons were merely electoral divisions made up of a few parishes, all citizens of twenty-five years of age and upwards who paid taxes equal to three days' earnings having the right to vote for electors. For this purpose about 4,300,000 men qualified, all of whom were bound to serve in the National Guard, hence their designation of "active citizens," those not qualifying being "passive citizens." The electors in their turn were given power to vote for the administrators of the department and of the district, the judges of tribunals, the members of the Assembly, and eventually the bishops of the Church. Of the newly-founded *Municipalités*, England's

official representative at Paris notes on the 19th February 1790, that "two-thirds of the mayors elected . . . are of noble families, which proves that the nobility, contrary to the intentions of the National Assembly, have not lost all influence with the people." Each department had a criminal court, each district a civil court, and each canton a police court. The *parlements* were abolished, and that most hated of all officials, the intendant, was dispossessed of his autocratic sway. Trial by jury in criminal cases was introduced, and the law regarding arrest and so on considerably improved.

The deficit in the national finances for 1789 amounted in November to no less a sum than 90,000,000 *livres*, although many of the provinces had paid their taxes promptly, and the desertion of soldiers and reductions in the naval yards had eased matters a little. The nobles having set a good example on the Night of Sacrifices, a patriotic fund was opened to which all might contribute. Louis sent some of his plate to be melted down, and a contemporary engraving depicts a number of society dames casting their jewels into the contribution box. This, it should be added, had more foundation in fact than many of the effusions of knights of the pen and pencil. A tax of a fourth of one year's income, payable in three yearly instalments by those whose annual increment was over 400 *livres* was decreed, but as the matter was left very much in the hands of the contributors, those whose patriotism did not extend to the pocket, or who had lost heavily owing to the depreciation of the public funds, found little difficulty in assessing themselves at as small an amount as was desirable.

There was one great institution in France which, despite the deprivations already suffered by it, was still enormously wealthy, namely the Church. As its concerns



WOMEN MAKE OFFERINGS TO THE NATION AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1789

(Engraved by Berthault after a drawing by Prieur. In the Bibliothèque Nationale)

largely occupied the attention of the Assembly during the next few months, it will save confusion if we deal with the matter without reference to other issues, leaving extraneous events for consideration afterwards.

From the point of view of by far the largest portion of the community, it had, like the guilds, outworn its usefulness as an organisation, and this was the general feeling of the Assembly.

It had, argued the deputies, pandered too much to power; its prelates had thought more of the Court and of gold than of their sees and the souls of their flocks. The Church was a cog-wheel, and a large one, of the cumbersome political machine slowly being pulled down for relegation to the scrap-heap. Respect was paid to the minor clergy, to the parish *curés* who toiled long, and often for next to nothing, and had therefore a more or less natural bias towards democracy, but the bishops belonged to the ranks of the privileged, and most of them were members of noble families.

Arthur Young, who traced his conversion to the death of a beloved daughter, read "some Scripture every day," walked ten miles to church on occasion, and in the twilight of his age preached to the villagers of Bradfield every Sunday evening, has nothing but kindly things to say of the clergy of France. He admits that it would be "impossible" for "so large a body of men, possessed of very great revenues" to be free from vice, but the *curés* compared favourably with those in England, and they preserved "an exterior decency of behaviour." Poaching, fox-hunting, and addiction to the bottle—three characteristics of so many of our eighteenth-century incumbents—were not to be found across the Channel. He admits an "ill spirit" on many topics in the *cahiers* of the French clergy, but that is all.

The concessions made by the clergy on the memorable 4th August were followed almost immediately by the total deprivation of tithes without compensation, thereby enriching landowners and agriculturists to the extent of a considerable sum per annum. This was only the thin edge of the wedge that was to force open the coffers of the Church. It was, perhaps, ironic that an ecclesiastic was the first to voice a proposal which must have occurred to many of the laity long before it was mooted in the Assembly, and which the Church herself could have scarcely failed to surmise would happen as the last resource of a financially-famished State. Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, "polished, cold, tricky, ambitious, and bad," according to Gouverneur Morris, and whom Napoleon afterwards characterised as "a silk stocking filled with excrement," held that as the lands of the Church were originally given by kings or nobles, they "may now be resumed by the nation which had succeeded to its rights." He proposed that benefices having no charge upon them should be immediately confiscated, and that the support of incumbents, the maintenance of hospitals and colleges, become the burden of the State. The majority of the higher ecclesiastics had been against the suppression of tithes, but many of the lower clergy were quite content to surrender revenues which never came their way. The laity heartily approved Talleyrand's measure. Maury and Siéyès ably supported the unpopular side, but Mirabeau held firm to the idea that the Church lands, which amounted to about one-fifth of the kingdom, were the property of the nation.

By a decree made in November 1789, they were confiscated, and the clergy became dependent on the State, which also undertook to provide the cost of maintaining religious services and the succour of the needy. A little

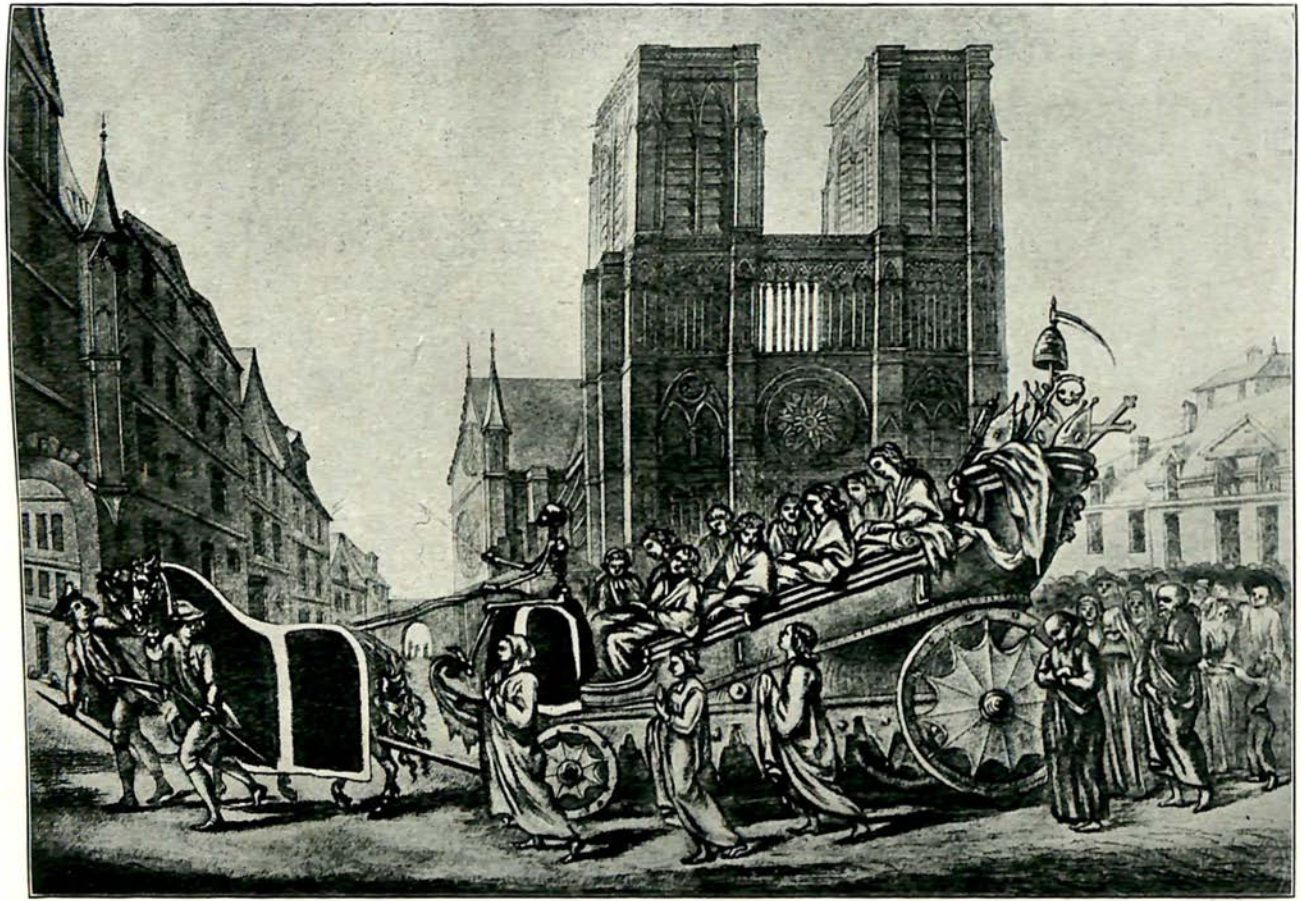
while later perpetual monastic vows were not legally recognised, the Orders which required them were abolished, and monks and nuns could leave at will and secure a pension. Certain domains of the Crown were also seized, and in the following month Crown and Church property valued at several hundreds of millions of *livres* was earmarked for sale during the course of four years, the idea being that if it were spread over a considerable period it would not suffer the depreciation that would certainly follow if it were offered at once. A paper currency was sanctioned on this security, and a first issue of *assignats* to the value of 400,000,000 *livres*, bearing interest at five per cent., was ordered. The land itself was apportioned out to the municipalities, who usually sold it on the instalment principle with immediate possession. This method of doing business had two opposite effects, It tended to encourage roguery in that many a man, after having secured an estate, disposed of whatever was on it and promptly decamped; and it helped to keep the country districts occupied, because the peasants were able to appease their insatiable land-hunger. They found it considerably more remunerative to till a field than to burn down a château. A little bundle of *assignats* in the hand was worth more to them than a pile of their lords' archives in the flames. At first both lands and houses reached a figure in excess of their valuation, sometimes so much as a third higher, but the price speedily dwindled.

During the debates in the Assembly the people manifested a feverish interest in the various ecclesiastical topics that were discussed, and a priest who walked the streets in clerical costume did so at considerable risk of being mobbed, so bitter was the revulsion of feeling. Although a Riot Act, based on that of England, was introduced

by Mirabeau in the middle of October, it was found necessary for the guards and patrols to be doubled and every bake-house guarded. Rumours of conspiracies and plots kept the capital at fever-heat, and some of the faubourgs threatened to rise owing to the continued scarcity of bread. In the country several of the towns refused to admit troops which were changing their quarters, and desertions became all too frequent.

Having dispossessed the Church of her property and made the clergy paid servants of the State, the next step was to reorganise it on democratic lines, in accordance with the system obtaining throughout the kingdom. Everything now being chosen by the people—or rather the tax-paying section of the people—and conducted on lines approaching uniformity, the idea of reducing the number of bishopries from 134 to 83—one for each department—was a fairly obvious notion. The King was no longer to be consulted in the matter of high ecclesiastical appointments, and the Pope's confirmation was deemed unnecessary. Prelate and priest alike were to be chosen by the people; the former by the electors of the department, the latter by the electors of each district. In this matter, of course, there were obvious advantages and disadvantages, particularly as Protestants and unbelievers had a voice in the matter, but it had one good effect in that the stipend of a *curé*, which differed according to his sphere of labour, was never to be less than 1200 francs, an amount considerably in advance of what had been hitherto paid.

It is conceivable that in time this new plan of operations might have found favour with all concerned, especially as there was no intentional malice towards the Church as an institution, and no purely theological questions were raised. Whatever virtue it possessed



THE "FUNERAL POMP OF THE MOST HIGH, MOST POWERFUL AND MAGNIFICENT SEIGNEUR CLERGY OF FRANCE. DECEASED THE 2ND OF NOVEMBER 1789, AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY"

Death conducts to the national treasury illustrious prelates and other dignitaries of the Church to deposit there the riches of which they have been despoiled. From a contemporary aquatint.

in the estimation of the clergy was entirely negatived by a decree, signed with great reluctance by Louis, that all ecclesiastics should swear to be "faithful to the nation, the law, and the King, and to maintain with all their power the constitution decreed by the National Assembly and accepted by the King." This was known as the civil constitution of the clergy. It alienated the Church from the Revolution, and caused Louis such spiritual anguish that he broke faith with his people.[1] In November 1790 prelates and priests alike were given one week in which to decide whether they would take the oath or be dismissed and sacrifice their pensions, with the additional risk of probable prosecution should they continue their ministrations. It is to the everlasting credit of the Gallican Church that every beneficed bishop, with the exception of four, including Talleyrand and Loménie de Brienne, refused to take an oath which committed them to uphold a constitution still in the making. About two-thirds of the "inferior" clergy did the same. In the Brief known as *Caritas* it was denounced by the Holy See early in the New Year of 1791, and from henceforth the majority of the priests were the steadfast enemies of the constitution which was to herald the Day of Better Things. This grave error of the Assembly was to lead to such terrible insurrections as that of La Vendée on the one hand and to persecution on the other. The non-juring clergy—that is to say, those who refused to acknowledge the civil constitution—declined to accept the sentence of deprivation, and entered upon bitter warfare with the new spiritual shepherds. Malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness were evident in almost every parish, with the inevitable result that the people knew not whom to serve, and many drifted into a dull and hopeless materialism.

[1] See *post*, p. 302.

CHAPTER XX

THE FÊTE IN THE CHAMP DE MARS

"We have come at last to such a pass that we can neither bear our ills nor their remedies." LIVY.

IN order to deal with the affairs of the Church as a whole, we have forestalled events a little, and we must now revert to the second month of 1790. At that time Louis was still held in high esteem by the majority of his subjects, but it was constantly noised abroad that he merely sanctioned the decrees of the Assembly and did not actually identify himself with their purport. It was doubtless for this reason that he appeared without ceremony in the Salle du Manège on the 4th February to associate himself "more closely and more openly" with all that the deputies had proposed "for the welfare of France." He promised "to defend and maintain that constitutional liberty whose principles are sanctioned by the will of the nation and by my own," and the Queen and himself would educate the Dauphin "in accordance with the new order of things." At the conclusion of the speech, which was received with cheers and the clapping of hands, each deputy on his part swore "to be faithful to the nation, the Law, and the King, and to uphold with all my might the constitution decreed by the National Assembly and accepted by the King." They were, of course, committing themselves to a constitution still unfinished. The example thus set was copied throughout the country.

Notwithstanding this outburst of patriotism, the re-

presentative of the Court of St. James mentions many rifts within the lute. A fortnight after the King had made his statement he writes: "Each day seems to aggravate the sufferings and multiply the complaints of the people. Commerce and manufactures are fallen to the lowest ebb, and those who once subsisted by industry now seek a livelihood in rapine and disorder." What FitzGerald terms "popular commotions" were still prevalent in many parts of France: "The object, plunder and rapine, is the same everywhere, and they only differ in the various degrees of violence and cruelty which attend them. Brittany, it may be almost said, is in a state of civil war." The political temperature of the country was scarcely likely to be normal, but the briefest glance at contemporary correspondence betrays the most extraordinary rises and depressions. Thus we find the same writer detailing on the 9th April that "upon the whole . . . it seems that people are becoming more reasonable, and that their calamities have taught them patience and resignation, for it is beyond a doubt that, although matters do not in reality mend, yet they do in appearance, and we now enjoy a state of tranquillity which promises to be more lasting than we could have flattered ourselves with some time ago," a good humour perhaps attributable, in the opinion of FitzGerald, to the allaying of public anxiety regarding the sale of Church property, which was being purchased by several big towns "to imitate the example of the capital," and to a disposition on the part of the Assembly to "flatter the people at large," without thought of future consequences.

It is worthy of note that FitzGerald concludes his despatch with a reference to disgraceful scenes in the Assembly. The democratic nature of this institution,

which now loomed so large in the public eye, became amazingly significant when it decreed, on the 22nd May, that although the initiative in the matter of peace and war belonged to the King, it was the right of the Assembly to ratify it or not. The question arose over a threatened resort to arms on the part of England and Spain with reference to Nootka Sound, off the west coast of North America, which meant that if hostilities broke out, France, by virtue of an offensive and defensive alliance signed nearly thirty years before, would be called upon to assist Charles IV with munitions and men. Louis was asked to do so, but while the deputies were willing to negotiate a defensive treaty, they resented the fulfilment of the old Family Compact. Spain, finding herself forsaken, conceded the points at issue, to the disappointment of the French aristocrats, who saw in the war an opportunity to deflect the minds of the people from the Revolution.

A few weeks later, titles of nobility, armorial bearings, liveries, and orders of knighthood were abolished. Many of those who possessed them went to swell the rapidly-growing army of *émigrés* across the frontier. The deputies, fully convinced that they were competent to decide international issues, found themselves hopelessly unable to prevent the gathering of an armed force of their own countrymen intent on arousing the slumbering Powers of Europe for the purpose of the invasion of France and the restoration of the old order.

Since the autumn of 1789 it had been the custom of the National Guards and of the inhabitants of neighbouring districts to swear friendship to each other and pledge themselves to uphold the decrees of the Assembly. These "federations," as they were called, were usually preceded by a feast, and naturally helped on the cause

of union to which the nation was now committed. The idea of a mammoth celebration, at which deputies from the new departments, electors, presidents of districts, representatives of corporations, the Church, the army, the navy, and the National Guard throughout the kingdom should be present, was first mooted by the municipality of Paris. It gratified the newly-awakened patriotic instincts of the people, it typified the unity of the country, and it would be some recognition of the labours of the many thousands of men who were working towards a common end, namely the entire reconstruction of the government of the country from department to commune. More important than all, it would afford a suitable opportunity for the troops, many of whom were getting more and more tainted with disloyalty and insubordination, to renew their oath of fidelity to the King, the nation, and the constitution.

While many of the popular orators of the day, both inside and outside of the Assembly, were ever ready to enforce their pleading by apt quotations from the classics and to recall the heroes of past ages in their search for examples, they were endeavouring at the same time to shatter the traditions and historical continuity of the kingdom. What others had done was of less consequence than what they themselves had accomplished or helped to bring about. The great landmark of history, the one outstanding event so far as they were concerned, was the fall of the Bastille. What more fitting date for the federation than the first anniversary of the victory of the people over the forces of the old despotism as represented by the fight with De Launay? Who a more fitting prelate to preside over the religious part of the function than Talleyrand, the holder of the see of Autun and the apostle of reform in ecclesiastical pro-

perty? That the blessing of the Church should have been sought is some indication that the people had at least a superstitious regard for her observances; that the time-serving man of the world over whose selection Louis had long pondered before nominating him to a bishopric was chosen to officiate at the altar is a cynical comment, in the light of after events, on the sincerity of the proceedings. Whatever may be the truth of Talleyrand's reported utterance when he was still at the seminary, "They want to make a priest of me, but they will have an unpleasant time of it," it is entirely worthy of the egotist who ruined the Gallican Church. Despite the liberal whitewashing of his character by certain modern historians, the many phases of his career show him to have been a political weathercock. It was the erstwhile Abbé de Périgord who consecrated the first of the non-juring bishops. In his *Mémoires* he makes no mention of the part he played on the 14th July 1790.

Not without a certain sense of fitness the Champ de Mars was chosen as the scene of the great national *fête*. This vast open space without the walls of the city had been the natural stage for many a display at which the dead and gone Kings of France had discussed grave matters with their lieges. Twelve months later it was to be the scene of a demonstration against the Assembly, and blood was to flow.

It was decided to turn the place into an amphitheatre capable of accommodating over 300,000 delegates and spectators, and 12,000 workmen were engaged on the formidable undertaking. As the weeks flew past it became increasingly evident that the work would not be completed in time. The National Guards volunteered their services, and on Sundays several thousands of the bourgeoisie lent a willing hand. So great was the interest

taken in this new form of amusement that the elections for the new Paris municipality decreed by the Assembly were postponed. At length everything was ready. In the middle of the Champ de Mars a beautiful altar with carved panels representing patriotic subjects was erected, surrounded by seats of turf sufficiently numerous to accommodate many thousands of spectators. The King was to occupy a chair, not a throne, next to the President on the platform reserved for deputies of the National Assembly. Banners and legends were numerous, a triumphal arch and a bridge had been specially erected, and the sculptured slaves on the statue of *le grand Monarque* in the Place des Victoires had been hewn away lest they should give offence to the inhabitants of the four conquered provinces they represented or present to foreigners an exhibition scarcely in keeping with the ideas of the moment.

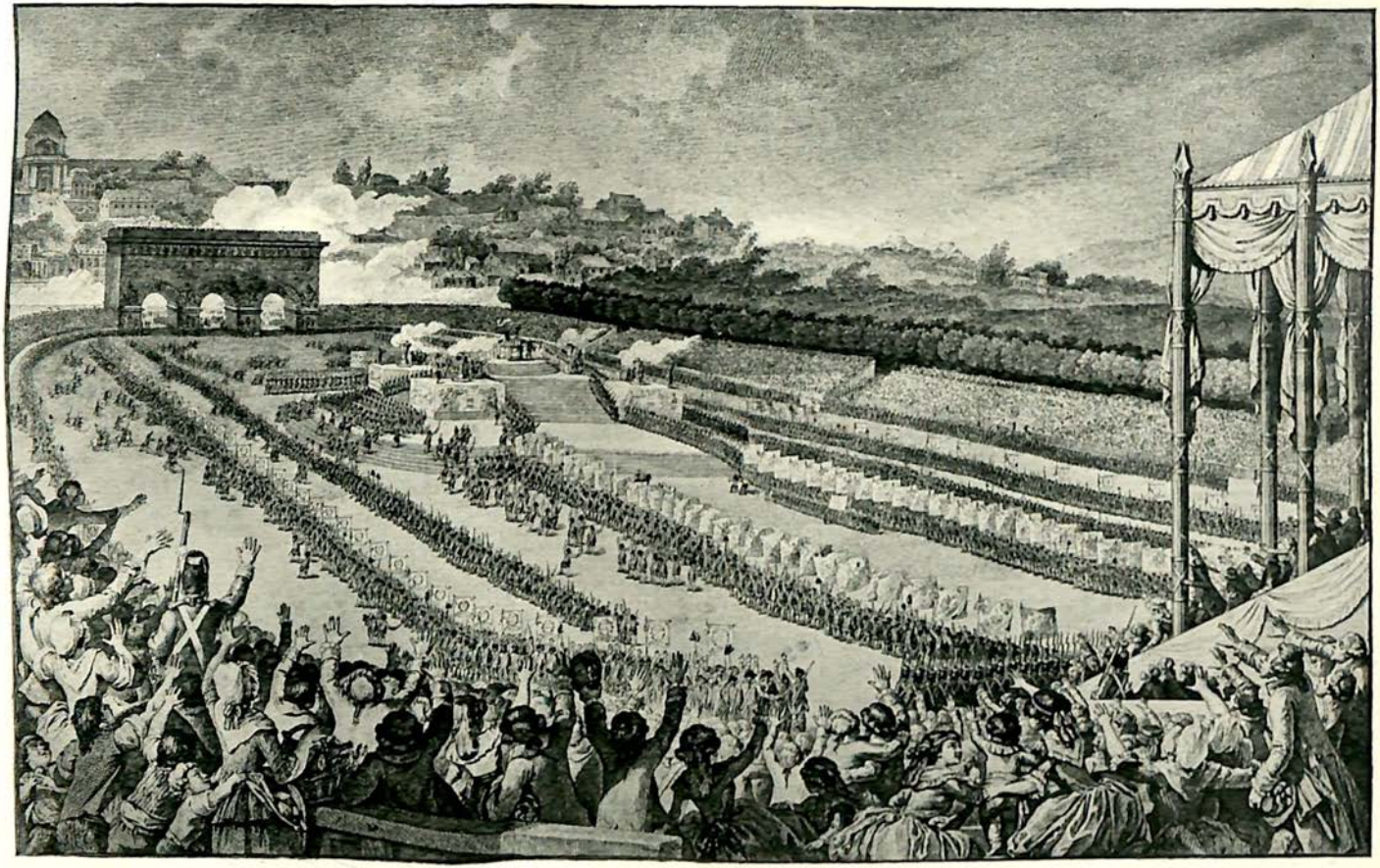
Notwithstanding a continual downpour of rain, the ceremony was a complete success; "without the least disturbance," as Lord Gower writes, although a temporary bridge of boats spanning the Seine gave way. The procession started from the site of the Bastille, and was made up of the Assembly of Electors of Paris, deputies of the Legislative Assembly, representatives of the municipality, presidents of the districts, scholars of the various Military Schools, regiments of the regular army, and the *fédérés*.

When Louis made his appearance there were frantic yells of "*Vive le roi!*" to the accompaniment of artillery. Then the oriflamme and the banners of the National Guards and of the troops were stacked about the altar, and Talleyrand, in full pontificals, began the celebration of mass, surrounded by threescore priests in white copes and wearing tricolour scarves. This part of the ceremony

was followed by the taking of the oath by Lafayette, commander of the National Guards, on behalf of himself and the troops: "We swear eternal fidelity to the nation, the law, and the King; to maintain to the utmost of our power the Constitution decreed by the National Assembly, and accepted by the King; and to hold ourselves bound to our countrymen by the indissoluble bonds of brotherhood." Cannon, trumpets, drums, and cheers of "*Vive le Roi! Vive la nation!*" greeted Lafayette as he turned from the altar, and each federate raised his right hand and shouted "*Je le jure!*" He was followed by the President of the National Assembly, and the deputies repeated the oath after him. "I, King of the French," said Louis, "swear to employ all the power delegated to me by the constitutional law of the State to maintain the constitution decreed by the National Assembly and accepted by me, and to enforce the execution of the laws." As a fitting conclusion Marie Antoinette held up the Dauphin in her arms, and is stated to have exclaimed, "Behold my son; he unites with me in the same sentiments." Whether she actually expressed herself in these terms or not scarcely signifies, for she implied by her dramatic action that they were meant.

After the ceremony in the Champ de Mars was over the weather cleared, and the three or four hundred thousand spectators moved on to enjoy the illuminations or to take part in one or other of the various festivities which had been got up to celebrate the event. On the site of the Bastille people danced.

On the following day the diplomatist in pontifical robes who celebrated mass before the representatives of what appeared to be a united France wrote to his friend the Comtesse de Flahaut, "the supreme being whom I adore," regarding "yesterday's ridiculous *fête*." It does



THE FESTIVAL OF THE CHAMP DE MARS, JULY 14, 1790

(*Engraved by Helman after Charles Monnet, Painter to the King*)

not make us feel more kindly disposed towards him when he adds, "I share the opinion of Voltaire: whether we ourselves believe in a God or not, it would be dangerous for all society that the multitude could think that, without punishment in this world, and without fear of chastisement in the other, it could steal, poison, and assassinate."

The events of the next few months showed that, notwithstanding the grand doings in Paris and elsewhere, there was a strong and dangerous undercurrent of discontent and sedition in the kingdom. This was particularly noticeable in the standing army, which, according to a recent decree of the Assembly, was to consist of from 150,000 to 154,000 men. There was what Gower calls a "universal relaxation of discipline," due to a certain extent to a loss of interest in their profession by the officers because their ranks were no longer reserved for the scions of aristocratic families, partly owing to the evil work of disloyal clubs which were formed by the soldiers, and because pay was usually in arrears. "The administration of the army," says the Secretary of War, "exhibits nothing but disturbance and confusion." Mutinies occurred at Metz and Nancy within a few weeks of the Federation. That in Lorraine assumed serious proportions, and had it not been speedily suppressed, might have developed into civil war. The three regiments stationed at Nancy, one of which was Swiss, rose against their officers, pillaged the military chest, and secured the alliance of the lowest orders of the town. The men were declared by the Assembly to have committed *lèze-nation.* They were given the opportunity of signifying their repentance within twenty-four hours or being punished, and M. de Malseigne was sent to inquire into the affair. This officer was forced to make a hasty exit from the town, and was followed so far as Lunéville, where a

body of carabineers handed him to his pursuers. The two French regiments signed their submission, but again rebelled, necessitating Bouillé, commander of the Army of the East, to collect all the troops and the National Guards upon whom he could rely to enforce obedience. The rebels surrendered, but their cause was supported by many people of the town who had obtained weapons from the arsenal, and used them against Bouillé's men. The prisoners, seizing the opportunity, managed to get back, and a fearful scene ensued for several hours. The refractory soldiers and their well-wishers were eventually forced to surrender, but not before over four hundred men and forty officers had been laid low. The National Guards and the troops, as well as Bouillé, received a vote of thanks from the King and the Assembly for the way they behaved in this affair. At the court-martial twenty-two of the Swiss were sentenced to be hanged by order of their own officers, and over forty were sent to the galleys for thirty years, but were released twelve months later. The French regiments were disbanded.

Had the outbreaks in the army been the only signs of a want of discipline they would have been sufficiently disturbing, but unfortunately much the same unhappy state of affairs obtained in the navy. A recurrence of the riotous scenes enacted at Toulon in November 1789 seemed not improbable in October 1790, while at Brest the temper of the sailors was as changeable as the weather. At Angers there were bread riots; in Languedoc damage was done to the canal in order to interrupt the free circulation of grain; in Paris the Duc de Castries' house was pillaged because he had wounded the democratic and therefore popular Charles de Lameth in a duel, and the gaming-houses about the Palais Royal had to be suppressed because they harboured thieves and pickpockets.

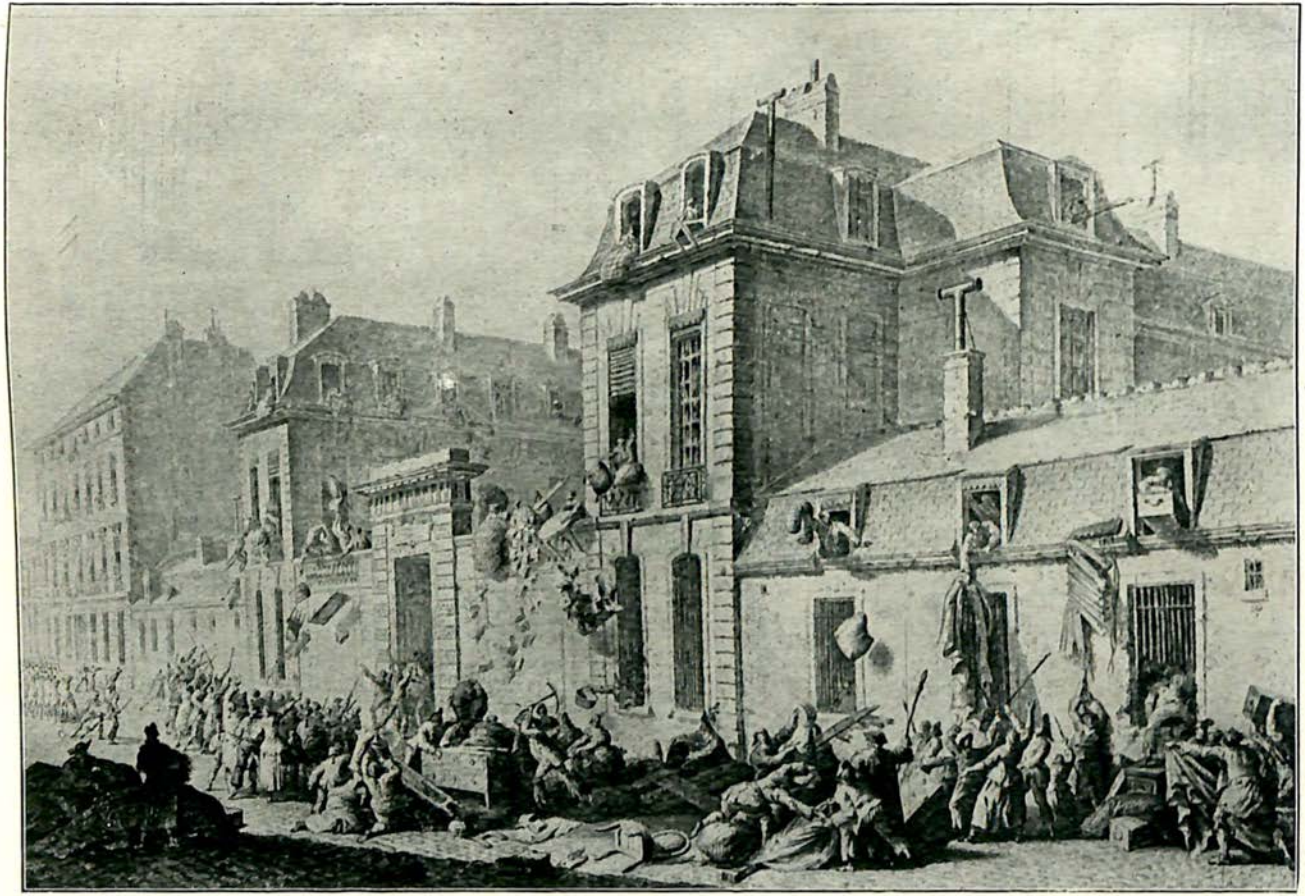


Photo Giraudon

THE MOB PILLAGE THE HOUSE OF THE DUC DE CASTRIES, NOVEMBER 13, 1790

(*From the original drawing by Prieur in the Louvre*)

At Chantilly the Prince de Condé's park and gardens were destroyed, and castle-burning became frequent in Brittany. Similar disturbances, too often occasioned by an artificial scarcity of corn due to the purchase of large quantities by people who could afford to "hold" it, took place in many other parts, particularly in the southern departments. The revolutionary spirit even inflamed the French West Indies. San Domingo rebelled, at Martinique the insurgents secured possession of the forts, and Guadeloupe suffered all the horrors of internecine war. As to the Ministry, Mirabeau discerned its "utter impotence," that it was "more cowardly than feeble," and directed to the object of "maintaining itself in power a few weeks longer, and of attempting to oppose, not the Revolution, but the revolutionists, instead of trying to render one real service to the King."

On the 3rd September Necker, no longer regarded as the saviour of his country, slow to keep pace with the rapid movement of the Revolution, and consequently unable to retain the favour of the populace, snubbed by the Assembly, and too egotistical to ally himself with Mirabeau, as he had the opportunity of doing, handed in his resignation. During the twelve months of his triumph and fall the deficit had trebled, a state of affairs brought about largely by the unsettled state of the nation and difficulties in collecting the taxes owing to a lack of co-operation on the part of the newly-formed municipalities. Necker was twice stopped during his journey to Switzerland, but eventually reached Coppet. Here he whom Mirabeau had proposed should be Prime Minister because he would then be as powerless as he was incapable, and whom Napoleon ungraciously and untruthfully dubbed "a doddering old idiot," continued to live in retirement until his death in 1804.

Far more important than the withdrawal from public life of the Genevese banker was the suppression of the *parlements*. That of Paris, whose magistrates, forming the vacation court, were allowed to sit in judgment upon both civil and criminal cases until October 1790, was the last to be closed. Remonstrances had already been made against the decree which annihilated the old judicature,[1] but it was determined to make one last plea. The seventeen magistrates of the *chambres de vacation* declared on the 14th inst. that as they had never intended to ratify the decrees which they had registered, "every registration is thereby rendered null and void." In addition, Le Peletier de Rosambo, Duport, Dupuis, and those associated with them in the memorial stated that they did not regard the results of the deliberations of the self-constituted National Assembly "as in harmony with the general wish of the nation." "They protest," runs this document, "and will not cease to protest, against everything which has been done, or which may be done by the deputies of the Estates-General, who in their mock assembly have, in violation of their express instructions, exceeded their power, which consisted chiefly in arranging for the payment of public debt, in providing for necessary expenses by means of an equitable apportionment of taxes, and lastly by effecting a wise reform in the different branches of the administration. But the deputies have not only exceeded, but have abused their powers by violating the rights of property of every kind; by the despoiling of the clergy, thus encouraging contempt for religion; by the annihilation of the nobility, which has always been one of the chief supports of the monarchy; by the degradation of his Royal Majesty by the attacks upon his authority, which has been reduced to a vain shadow, and, lastly, by a

[1] See *ante*, p. 266.

confusion of powers destructive of the true principles of the monarchy." The protest had not the slightest effect in dissuading the Assembly from proceeding with its plans.

A change of Ministry followed Necker's resignation. Mirabeau had hoped and schemed that it might be anti-Lafayette, for the commander of the National Guard was considerably more revolutionary at heart than his rival, and had refused all overtures on the part of Mirabeau to anything approaching a mutual understanding. In this matter the great Tribune was grievously disappointed. Although the popular hero of the American War was cordially detested by Marie Antoinette, his opinion carried considerable weight, and his friend Duport du Tertre, a bourgeois, became Keeper of the Seals, an office merged some little time afterwards in the Ministry of Justice. Duportail, also a nominee of Lafayette, succeeded Latour du Pin as Minister of War, Claret de Fleurieu became Minister of the Navy, Valdec de Lessart took charge of the Finances, and subsequently of the Interior, and Montmorin, the only one of the old Ministers who did not resign, continued as Minister of Foreign Affairs.

CHAPTER XXI

MIRABEAU, THE MAN OF POWER

"It was by Mirabeau that the people were first made to feel the force of the orator; first taught what it was to hear spoken reason and spoken passion; and the silence of ages in those halls was first broken by the thunder of his voice echoing through the lofty vaults now covering multitudes of excited men." BROUGHAM.

"HE was tall, but at the same time stout and heavily built. His unusually large head was made to appear larger by a mass of curled and powdered hair. His coat buttons were of some brightly-coloured stone, and the buckles of his shoes enormous. His dress was an exaggeration of the fashion of the day and in bad taste. In his eagerness to be polite, he made absurdly low bows, and began the conversation with pretentious and rather vulgar compliments. His manner wanted the ease of good society, and this awkwardness was most conspicuous when he addressed the ladies. It was only when the conversation turned upon politics that his eloquence poured forth, and his brilliant ideas fascinated his audience."

This is the pen-portrait of Honoré Gabriel Riqueti, Comte de Mirabeau, bequeathed to us by his intimate friend La Marck. Evidence of that "great quality" of boldness which so much appealed to Bailly has been given on many of the preceding pages, but it was not until the autumn of 1789 had set in that Mirabeau became a really powerful factor in public affairs. As this disciple of Montesquieu is now to play an important part in the development of the Revolution, some knowledge

of his past history is indispensable to anything approaching an understanding of the complex character of this impulsive Provençal and the policy he pursued during the two succeeding years of his life.

Honoré belonged to the patrician order, was the son of the querulous Marquis de Mirabeau who had achieved distinction as the author of *L'Ami des Hommes*, a certain amount of notoriety as a disciple of Quesnay (the physician of Madame de Pompadour), and the grateful thanks of those whom he benefited by his philanthropy. This strange admixture of virtues and faults was one of those men whom we call, for want of a better term, "impossible." Certainly his son Honoré loved him little, and was far from pursuing an exemplary line of conduct in directions other than that of filial affection. The two quarrelled incessantly, and the parent eventually resorted to a by no means uncommon device of fathers with troublesome scions at this particular period. He endeavoured to solve the problem of the youth's insubordination by obtaining *lettres de cachet* for his imprisonment. Possibly a period of enforced restraint might curb his excessive ardour. But just as the proof of the pudding is not in the eating but in the after effect, so the proof of the Marquis's theory was in the aftermath, and it altogether failed to have the desired effect. At the age of seventeen Honoré entered the army, and becoming interested in the career of Condé, offered literary incense at the shrine of the hero of Rocroy. In 1769, the year of Napoleon's birth, and for that reason one of the most momentous in modern history, he was serving with the colours in Corsica. An unhappy marriage was followed by debts, more literary work, a further term of imprisonment, and a liaison with a married woman. Malesherbes advised him to quit the country. He did so, spending some time

in Switzerland and Holland, and earning what little he could by his pen. The abduction of Madame Monnier, which Mirabeau in his sublime optimism had believed to have "blown over," led to his arrest and an exhausting imprisonment in Vincennes extending over three years, and helping to undermine his sturdy constitution. In 1781 he was released, and in 1783 crossed to England. Here he renewed his acquaintance with Sir Gilbert Elliot, afterwards Lord Minto, met Lord Shelburne, Wilkes, and the Lansdowne House coterie, and was befriended by Samuel Romilly, then a briefless barrister. Mirabeau's "extraordinary talents," the last-mentioned avows in his *Memoirs*, "the disorders of his tumultuous youth, the excesses he had committed, the law-suits in which he had been engaged, the harsh treatment he had experienced from his father, his imprisonment in the dungeon of Vincennes, and the eloquent work he had written, with the indignant feelings which so unjust an imprisonment inspired, had already given him considerable celebrity in Europe; but it was a celebrity greatly inferior to that which he afterwards acquired. He brought with him, to this country, a short tract which he had written against the order of Cincinnatus,[1] lately established in America, which it was his object to publish here. He was desirous that an English translation of it should appear at the same time with the original. He read his manuscript to me, and seeing that I was very much struck with the eloquence of it, he proposed to me to become his translator, telling me that he knew that it was impossible to expect anything tolerable from a translator who was paid. I thought the translation would be useful exercise for

[1] Washington was the head of this military order, which was organised in 1783. "The Cincinnati," said Mirabeau, "then, are nobles, aristocrats, veritable patricians." In this way the word "aristocrat," so frequently heard during the Revolution, was born. His pamphlet was published in London in 1788.

me. I had sufficient leisure on my hands, and I undertook it."

Mirabeau's favourite resort during his stay in England was the House of Commons, where he listened to debates with profound interest. His study of our constitution and how it worked in practice had a marked influence on the policy he adopted regarding the relative parts played by the King and his subjects in his subsequent political career.

In 1786 Mirabeau was sent by Vergennes on a secret mission to the Court of Berlin. Suffering from his chronic complaint of shortness of money, he threatened to publish his official communications unless Montmorin, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, paid him an amount equal to that which he could secure from a bookseller for issuing them. Montmorin consented and handed over the gold on condition that Mirabeau should not seek election in Provence for the States-General. The author kept neither half of the bargain; he printed the letters and sought to represent the nobles of Provence in the National Assembly. They rejected his overtures, but not so the Third Estate. Both Aix and Marseilles elected him. He chose Aix. "In every company, of every rank," writes Young in June 1789, "you hear of the Count de Mirabeau's talents; that he is one of the first pens of France, and the first orator; and yet that he could not carry from confidence six votes on any question in the States."

To briefly review the various phases of Mirabeau's work in the States-General, let it be said that although in the first days of their meeting he had urged delay in the matter of the verification of their powers by the deputies in common, he shortly afterwards importuned the Third Estate to proceed irrespective of the other Orders. He

showed a similar hesitancy in signing the declaration of the Tennis Court, as though uncertain as to its after effects. He founded the pioneer of the political organs of the French Revolution, and *Les États Généraux*, as the first two issues were called, had not been in the hands of its subscribers more than forty-eight hours before it was suppressed, to be revived under the title of *Lettres à mes Commettants*. He was successful, however, in establishing the liberty of the Press.

Mirabeau took a leading part in the debate which ended in the adoption of the designation National Assembly, although his motion for calling the deputies Representatives of the French People was lost. "Oh, my friend," he declared to Dumont on his dying bed, "how right we were when we endeavoured at the first to prevent the Commons from declaring themselves the National Assembly! It is this that has been the source of all our evils. From the moment they carried that victory they have never ceased to show themselves unworthy of it."

On the occasion of the *Séance royale*, it will be remembered, he had more or less politely informed the Grand Master of Ceremonies when the latter asked if they had not heard the King's command to separate, that "nothing but force will expel us." When Louis submitted to the union of the three Orders, it was Mirabeau who burst forth into raptures about a Revolution whose battles were mere discussions, and concluded by saying that "there is now reason to hope that we have begun the history of man, the history of brothers who, born for mutual happiness, agree when they vary, since their objects are the same, and their means only are different." When the troops were gathering about Paris and Versailles, Mirabeau had said that the presence of the National Assembly was "the best pledge of order," and his reply

to the King's suggestion that the States be removed to Noyon or Soissons was to "insist" on the withdrawal of the offending troops. To him the danger was national—danger for the provinces, the capital, the troops, the deputies: "mighty revolutions have arisen from causes far less striking!" It was he who, on the day following the fall of the Bastille, urged "silent respect" as the welcome to Louis on his approaching visit to the Assembly. Thus he denounced a despotism which he loathed as vehemently as he welcomed a constitution and monarchical government plus a strong executive. In spite of opposition and calumny, he argued and voted for Louis maintaining the right of absolute veto and of declaring war, and when Necker was unable to obtain his desired loan, and asked for an increase of direct taxation, Mirabeau unhesitatingly and whole-heartedly supported him. On this last-mentioned occasion his oratory was without result, but eventually his impassioned appeal carried the day.

To enter into negotiations with the Court was not therefore a repudiation of the convictions he had formerly held. He was no less a liberal because he became the secret adviser of Louis, which the public had long suspected. Indeed, in June 1789 it was common report that he had already received 100,000 *livres* from the Queen. Because he accepted money from the King we must not unhesitatingly condemn him. He was up to his eyes in debt, and seized an opportunity which would enable him to discharge the just dues of his creditors. At the same time he was clearly of opinion that liberalism was advancing with too rapid strides. His firm belief in the usefulness of a monarchy led him to draw up an exceedingly lengthy memoir to Monsieur the Comte de Provence at the request of the Comte de la Marck, who had a seat in the

States-General. This was delivered on the 15th October 1789. In it Mirabeau urged the necessity for immediate action. He felt that the position of the King in Paris was "obviously prejudicial to the success of the Revolution." The capital, he said, "swallowed up the taxes of the kingdom. Paris is the seat of the financial régime which the provinces loathe. Paris has created the debt. Paris by its miserable stock-gambling has destroyed public credit, and has compromised the honour of the nation. Must the National Assembly, too, regard this city only and sacrifice the whole kingdom for it? Several provinces fear that the capital will dominate the Assembly and direct the course of its work. Paris demands only certain financial measures, while the provinces care only for agriculture and farming. Paris cares only for money, the provinces require laws. The dissensions between Paris and the provinces are clearly recognised, and will break forth on the least excuse. . . . Paris is lost if she is not brought to order and forced to moderation. The necessity of supplies places her at the mercy of the rest of the kingdom, and her inevitable ruin would result from a prolongation of the anarchic tyranny in which only her deceiving and deceived leaders, who are forced into a policy of unmeasured innovation by their own excesses, have any interest."

What measures should be taken to ensure the King's safety and the restoration of his rights? Mirabeau was convinced that if matters were allowed to slide the monarchy would be shaken to its foundations and probably dissolved. "It is easy to foresee what is to be apprehended by what has already happened." Mirabeau warns the King not to withdraw to Metz, "or upon any other frontier," which "would be to declare war upon the nation and abdicate the throne." Equally foolish would

it be for Louis to go to the interior of the kingdom and call the nobility around him, for the nation looked upon the gentry "as their implacable enemies." In Mirabeau's opinion, Louis should retire to Rouen, "because it is in the centre of the kingdom, because a military position taken up at just this point commands a wide range of waterways, controls the food supply of the only centre of resistance which need be considered, and may change this resistance into benedictions if the beneficence of the King, his efforts and personal sacrifices, should succeed in restoring plenty. Rouen is further to be selected, inasmuch as such a choice proclaims that there is no intention of flight, and that the only object is to conciliate the provinces." Everything should be done openly, the Tuileries should be left in broad daylight, and the nation taken into confidence by means of proclamations. The Assembly would then be called to Rouen to continue its work, and later a new convention summoned "to judge, confirm, modify and ratify the work of the first assembly."

"The only point," Mirabeau concludes, "upon which the King should be inflexible is the refusal to enter into any plan which has not for its single aim the peace and safety of the State and the inseparability of monarch and people. This inseparability is felt in the heart of every Frenchman. It must be realised in action and in the forces of the State."

Nothing came of the overtures at first, but eventually the fears of the Queen that she and Louis would be "reduced to the painful extremity of seeking aid of Mirabeau" became a necessity. On the understanding that his debts should be paid and a pension granted to him he wrote his first Note to the Court on the 10th May 1790. He asked for two months in which to "bring back to reason all prudent citizens." From

henceforth he devoted his life with a fixity of purpose entirely inconsistent with the years that had gone before, although a superficial study of his policy would lead one to presume that he ran with the royal hare and hunted with the democratic hound. Thus we find him a leader of the Jacobin Club and secret adviser of the King at one and the same time. He was playing a double rôle with deliberate intention.

It was a considerable time before Marie Antoinette could persuade herself to meet this Don Juan in love and politics. However, in the early days of June 1790, when the Court had moved to the summer palace of St. Cloud by virtue of permission granted by the Assembly at the behest of Mirabeau, she consented to waive her objections. An audience was arranged for the 3rd July, when thousands were digging in the Champ de Mars, and Paris was agog with the coming Federation. He saw her in the company of Louis, the while his nephew paced outside with a note from his uncle to be handed to the captain of the National Guard should the writer not return in forty-five minutes. For Mirabeau was a little uncertain of coming events; he might be assassinated. He was immensely impressed by the dulness of Louis, by the "lofty soul and intelligence" of the Queen, who on her part declared that he made her ill. He endowed her with many attributes she did not possess. She, for instance, was all for salvation from the Powers; he was heart and soul for a constitutional monarchy with a strong executive. France was to work out her own salvation. He saw four enemies "at the charge: the taxes, bankruptcy, the army, and winter." He was of deliberate opinion that civil war—the most terrible of all resorts to arms—was far preferable to the King being held a virtual prisoner by Paris, and that it would

Photo Neurdein

HONORÉ GABRIEL RIQUETTI, VISCOUNT MIRABEAU (1748–1791)

(*From the painting by Couderc at Versailles*)

restore the monarchy by annihilating anarchy. "What will Paris be three months hence?" he asks; "assuredly a poorhouse, perhaps a theatre of horrors. Is it to such a place that the head of the nation should entrust his existence and our only hope?" Again, "Why should we fear civil war? Civil war will be the means of saving the King, who will be lost without hope if he continues in Paris." He was dissatisfied with the present Assembly, looked forward with eagerness to a successor which would revise some of the less satisfactory features of the constitution, and to a healthy public opinion that would support such a measure. Rouen, he thought, was sufficiently far removed from the clamour of factions to make an admirable resting-place for both King and Assembly, and they should go there with the full cognisance of the public. Troops must be distributed at a safe distance, ready for concentration if necessary. Should the Assembly refuse to move from the capital, a new one should be summoned. The food supply of Paris could be stopped if Lafayette showed fight, which would mean that the starving populace would soon have finished with that popular soldier, and Louis could pose as the "Father of his People" by relieving their distress.

It was worse than folly, Mirabeau assured the King, to approach the frontier, which would cause the nation to believe that an alliance with the *émigré* princes and nobles was contemplated, for they were relying on outside interference. Had Louis seriously entertained Mirabeau's projects he might have saved his crown, but while he listened to them he was not only negotiating with the King of Prussia and the Head of the Holy Roman Empire for armed intervention, but also planning a secret flight to the frontier, where Bouillé, a staunch royalist, held command.

When it had been mooted a few months before that Mirabeau was likely to be introduced into the Ministry, it was decreed that no deputy could hold office and his seat in the Assembly, and that should he resign, he could not accept such a position until six months had elapsed. There can be no doubt that almost immediately after Mirabeau became Chairman of the Diplomatic Committee of the Assembly in July 1790 he assumed the management of foreign affairs, although Montmorin was nominally the head of that important department. The result was completely satisfactory. Disposed at first to maintain the Family Compact, he came to the conclusion, after careful consideration, that a foreign war would be harmful to the cause of the monarchy, and advised peace. In the debate on the right of declaring peace and war, it was Mirabeau who saved the situation for Louis by means of a skilful compromise.[1]

"The great quality of Mirabeau," says Bailly, "was boldness; it was this that fortified his talents, directed him in the management of them, and developed their force. Whatever might be his moral character, when he was once elevated by circumstances he assumed a grandeur and a purity, and was exalted by his genius to the full height of courage and of virtue." Madame de Staël, who cannot be accused of over-fondness for Mirabeau, admits that "the whole appearance of him gave an idea of some great irregular force and power." "The Friend of Man" had early discerned the mental avoirdupois of his son. "Since the late Cæsar," he writes of him, "never was there such audacity seen as in him. He says that he has his star. He has perhaps less genius, but he certainly has every whit as much *esprit*." Whatever he had to say in the States-General and the

[1] See *ante*, p. 274.

National Assembly was put in a tempestuous way which could not fail to attract attention or to influence his listeners. An aristocrat by birth, a democrat at heart, a royalist in practice, a hater of monarchical tyranny who yet wished to save the throne, his dramatic intensity, his tremendous capacity for sustained effort, his reckless courage, and a voice capable of such wonderful expression that a leading actor of the Théâtre Français told him that he had mistaken his vocation—even his repulsive ugliness stood him in good stead. "All his contemporaries," says Victor Hugo, "are unanimous on this point—he was something magnificent." Collected and fearless, neither honouring God nor holding a brief for humanity, he could listen to the haranguing of a *poissarde* who bade him remember the tragic death of Foulon as an example of how "traitors" fared, and calmly purchase a pamphlet on the "Discovery of the Great Treason of the Comte de Mirabeau" at one and the same time. When the dreaded cry, "To the lantern! To the lantern!" was raised, he merely replied, "My friend, you can have me afterwards, but now I am going to the Assembly." He swayed the Assembly as none other. When Mesdames Adélaïde and Victoire, the King's aunts, threatened to leave their country house for Italy, despite the remonstrances of some of the sections of Paris, the question of their detention came before the deputies. They were allowed to depart on the strength of one cynical phrase from the lips of Mirabeau. "Europe," he shouted from the tribune, "will be astonished to learn that the great Assembly has spent several days in deciding whether two old women shall hear mass in Paris or in Rome."

From the day on which the daughters of Louis XV left Paris there was a general feeling that Monsieur, and perhaps the King himself, would follow their example.

It needed little more than a few words from Barnave, who suggested in the Assembly, that the fortress should be demolished to send an angry mob to the castle of Vincennes with the fixed intention of tearing it down stone by stone as the "symbol of tyranny" had been razed after the stirring days of July 1789. Certain repairs were being carried out at the fortress which made it evident to many that the King was about to use it in his endeavour to leave the capital, the idea being that Vincennes and the Tuileries were connected by an underground passage. Those who thought such a notion worthless were confident that it was about to become a second Bastille, and that the work going on was being done to strengthen the old walls, within which State prisoners were still interned. Lafayette and his National Guards speedily followed the mob, and together with Santerre, the popular and notorious brewer of the Faubourg St. Antoine, quelled the infuriated mass.

While this was going on in the south of the city, an extraordinary scene was being enacted at the Tuileries. In the higher circles of society it was believed that the mob would attack the King's palace. This seemed not improbable, because noisy scenes had taken place in the garden and an attempt made to enter the château four days before because of a belief that Mesdames Adélaïde and Victoire had smuggled away the Dauphin. The mob wanted to make sure that the fraud of substitution had not been perpetrated. Several hundred royalists, armed with short daggers, made their way to the royal apartments. Louis at once ordered them to disarm themselves, and many baskets were filled with weapons, which on the arrival of Lafayette were handed over to him and distributed to the National Guard.

Writing from Paris to London on the 25th March

1791, George Hammond tells the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, a post which the correspondent himself held in later years, that "No party in the National Assembly seems to be actuated by an adherence to a regular, well-defined system, which is, I think, pretty clearly proved by the contradictory decrees that are every day issuing out to answer the emergency of the moment, and even if there was a system, there does not appear to be any man of abilities so transcendent, or of patriotism so unsuspected, as to be capable of giving direction and energy to the movements of any compact *concentrated* body of individuals. This is a circumstance which separates the French Revolution from every preceding one in any other country, and renders it impossible to discover a clue to the present and future operations of that body, in whom all authority is at present centred."

Had Mirabeau been shown this communication, he would have admitted the truth of the gloomy statements and prognostications it contains. He who had laboured prodigiously and with amazing optimism to reconstruct France and to underpin the tottering throne knew that his days were numbered. "I carry with me the ruin of the monarchy. After my death factions will dispute about its fragments." It was thus that he summed up the situation on the day of his death.

The size of his heart, or rather of its generous qualities, was in keeping with the ample proportions of his bulky frame. Less than a week before he breathed his last, and two days after the above letter was despatched, the question of the mineral wealth of the kingdom was raised in the Assembly. Mirabeau, although in great physical anguish, insisted on putting in an appearance and speaking in opposition, mainly

because his friend La Marck had certain mining rights in France. "It is his swan-song," said Lafayette; "he is sacrificing what remains in him of life to his friendship."

On the 2nd April 1791 the great Tribune was dead. "The Jacobins," writes Gower, "will no longer be curbed by Mirabeau, and the friends of Government will feel the loss of his abilities, for, as Mr. de Montmorin well observed to me yesterday, men of great talents without principle may be of service to their country, but little talents with little intrigues are sure to be the bane of it."

They gave him a magnificent funeral, and buried him in the unfinished Panthéon, the national Valhalla.

CHAPTER XXII

THE FLIGHT TO VARENNES

"The King must astonish his subjects."—MARIE ANTOINETTE.

IN the spring of 1791, "a sort of halt or truce appeared to have taken place in the Revolution," says Frénilly. "It was hardly to be recognised by any other sign than the tricoloured cockade, and even then fashion or the aristocracy had modified it in a hundred ways, and a host of hats no longer wore it. Certainly no one yet dreamed of the reign of savages. The republican institution, which was beginning to ferment in certain over-excited brains, was but an indefinite theory, without echo. The transmission of the crown to the Orleans branch [1] was the only substantial point in the revolutionary programme, the only reality that one could grasp in the midst of the chaos; and this reality, enveloped in mystery, was even then only visible to the trained eye. It needed trouble, but also calm, to ripen and burst forth. Everything was apparently peaceful; universal destruction was being carried out legally; and disorder, without encountering any resistance, was being organised in an orderly manner. The public debt had been absorbed by *assignats*, which though they abounded, had yet depreciated little and made business extraordinarily brisk. Commercial prosperity was at its height, and the mass of citizens said: 'All's well! The Revolution is over; let us enjoy ourselves and rest.' On the other hand, the Constituent, left behind by the leaders of the

[1] The Duke had now returned from his "mission" to England.

Jacobins, began to regret some of its acts and slacken its pace. The mass of the population was inactive; agitation existed only in the silence of the Palais Royal and amidst the uproar of the clubs. A foreigner might have thought France was the most peaceable country in Europe, and perhaps he would not have been wrong had it been possible for Henry IV or Louis XIV to awaken in the bed of Louis XVI; for I have ever had little faith in the power of events, and a good deal in that of the man who directed them."

Far from shaping the course of affairs, the King had seen his power dwindle until it was nothing more than a travesty. He began to distrust the Assembly, and the feeling was reciprocated. It decreed that when the Assembly was sitting the King must not be farther removed from it than twenty leagues. Should he leave Paris and not return for three months, it would be understood that he had abdicated. Considerably more latitude was granted to Monsieur, who could visit any part of the kingdom, but could not pass the frontier without permission of the deputies.

On Holy Monday, April 18, 1791, Louis had further proof of the power of the people as opposed to his own. It was formerly held by historians that the incident arose out of the determination of the King to receive the sacrament from the hands of a priest who had not assented to the civil constitution of the clergy. It now appears that this was not the case.[1] Apparently the only reason why the royal family desired to go to Saint Cloud was in order to obtain a little more personal liberty, although it is possible that it may have been a preliminary to flight In support of the former contention, Gower, in his official

[1] See, for instance, *Marie Antoinette*, by H. Belloc, p. 258, as opposed to *A History of the French Revolution*, by H. Morse Stephens, vol. i. p. 440.

despatch of the 11th March, attributes the indisposition from which Louis was then suffering to indigestion and lack of exercise. "The King of France," he says, "naturally of a full habit of body, has never been sufficiently abstemious in his diet; but, while he remained at Versailles, a constant course of hard exercise prevented the bad effects which an excess of food would otherwise have produced: at Paris he has been debarred the advantage of exercise; to this cause, and perhaps, in some degree, to agitation of mind in consequence of what happened lately at the Thuilleries, is to be attributed a fever under which he has suffered for some days past."

Whatever the cause of the monarch's decision to visit Saint Cloud may have been, the results are certainly not conjectural. All the arrangements were carried out with the full approval of Bailly and Lafayette. The royal family and the Marquise de Tourzel, the royal governess, were allowed to enter the carriage, but they got no farther on their journey. Members of the National Guard seized the reins of the horses, and received the plaudits of the crowd which had collected in the Carrousel. For nearly two hours they remained in this unhappy position, during which the Queen must have heard the coarse remarks that were passed about "the Austrian." Both Bailly and Lafayette were powerless. "It is strange," avowed Louis, thrusting his head out of the window to speak to the Mayor, "that, having restored liberty to the nation, I should not myself be free." At last the prisoners returned to the palace—there was no other alternative. Lafayette, feeling that he had the shadow of authority without the substance, tendered his resignation, but was persuaded to withdraw it. "How naughty all these people are," exclaimed the Dauphin, "to cause papa so much pain, when he is so good." The King complained

personally to the Assembly, which listened attentively and did nothing. Within a few hours Marie Antoinette was putting her plans of escape into channel for further development. So, indeed, was Louis, who instructed the Minister of Foreign Affairs to send a circular to the diplomatic agents, ambassadors, and ministers of France at foreign courts which was a tissue of lies from beginning to end. It was the "most explicit wish" of Louis that his sentiments regarding the Revolution and the constitution should be made known. "The enemies of the constitution," runs one passage, "never cease repeating that the King is not happy; as if a King could have any other happiness than that of his people; they say that his authority is diminished, as though authority founded on force were not less powerful and more uncertain than the authority of the law; finally, that the King is not free, an atrocious calumny, if it is thereby implied that he has been forced to act against his will, and absurd if people see an infringement of his liberty in his Majesty's consent, given more than once, to remain in the midst of the citizens of Paris: a consent which he owes to their patriotism, even to their fear, and above all to their love." This communication was read to the Assembly on the day it was despatched, namely, the 23rd April 1791, and was applauded.

Professor Aulard, whose political history of the period is invaluable to students, attributes the flight of Louis largely to a troubled conscience over religious matters. He says: "On the day when the Pope, on the day when the bishops told him that in sanctioning the civil constitution of the clergy he would endanger his salvation, he was very profoundly troubled, and went in very fear of hell. Between July 12, 1790, the day on which the Assembly finally voted the civil constitution, and August 24th,

the day on which he sanctioned it, he suffered greatly in his Christian conscience; it was a crisis in his life." In the opinion of the same authority, Louis approved the document "because those who surrounded him, who were in terror of the probable consequences of the veto, weighed upon him. But he gave his consent in anguish; he felt that he was committing a mortal sin." Louis then played Jesuit.

The scheme is not difficult to understand. On the north-eastern frontier the Marquis de Bouillé, a whole-hearted royalist, commanded a body of regulars. Louis was to make his way to Montmédy, where the general hoped to be able to concentrate some 9000 men on the pretext that Austrian troops were on the move. Of the two possible routes, that viâ Rheims was the shorter, but Louis, against Bouillé's advice, decided to take the road which ran through Châlons, Sainte Menehould, Clermont-en-Argonne, Varennes, and Sédan. After leaving Châlons, which was in Bouillé's command, small detachments were to be stationed at various places to escort the royal fugitives to their destination, the general silencing any possible suspicion as to the movement of troops by drawing on his imagination and informing inquisitive folk of a convoy of treasure from the capital which it was his imperative duty to safeguard. If all went well, it was believed that outside assistance would be forthcoming, and Louis would return to Paris in triumph. The thought uppermost in the Queen's mind at the moment was the safety of her children and herself; all else was vague, and was to be determined by the kind of reception France extended to the manifesto Louis intended to leave behind.

In addition to Bouillé, two other men were chiefly concerned. They were the Baron de Breteuil and Comte Axel de Fersen. The former, a born intriguer, was then

living at Brussels, and was in frequent communication with Louis and his consort through Fersen, a handsome Swedish officer, the son of a field-marshal and a leader of the Liberal party, who had seen service in America and conceived a passionate regard for Marie Antoinette. This regard rumour enlarged upon until it was generally believed that he was her lover, although there is not the slightest evidence that such was the case. He seems to have been a chivalrous young man with a liking for adventure and rather apt to wear his heart on his sleeve. He had certainly been in love with at least two women since he had made the acquaintance of Marie Antoinette in January 1774, while doing the grand tour which was then regarded as indispensable to the education of a gentleman, and before he left to join the French forces at Yorktown, more or less as a protest against the base insinuations made against him, particularly by the Comte de Provence. "I must confide to your Majesty," the envoy of the King of Sweden had written, "that the young Count Fersen has been so well received by the Queen that various persons have taken it amiss. I own that I am sure that she has a liking for him. I have seen proofs of it too certain to be doubted. During the last few days the Queen has not taken her eyes off him, and as she gazed, they were full of tears." His first flame was Miss Lyel, later Countess Delawarr, and the second a Mrs. Sullivan, an intimate friend of the Prince of Wales, and destined to change her name to Crawford.[1] Upon Fersen devolved the carrying out of a multitude of details large and small essential to the success of the plan so far as the actual flight from Paris was concerned. One fairly obvious mistake was made at the very beginning. The Baroness Korff, a Russian

[1] H. Morse Stephens, vol. i. p. 442.

acquaintance, was the possessor of a cumbersome berline capable of holding half a dozen persons, and this he secured for the journey. The fact that it was new and painted yellow was likely to attract attention as it passed along the road, and the white upholstery was also an evil choice, for it served as an excellent background to show up the forms and features of the travellers. It would have been wiser had the royal party been split into two and travelled separately, as Marie Antoinette had wished, but of this Louis would not hear. They were to "perish or escape together." In another direction Fersen's friendship with the Baroness stood him in good stead, for she had no difficulty in obtaining passports for herself and suite, which were duly handed over for the use of the King and Queen of France, Princess Elizabeth, the Marquise de Tourzel, and the two children—six in all. It was Fersen who carried the luggage to the vehicle, and who was to drive them in a cab to the berline near the Barrière Saint-Martin, the eastern boundary of Paris. The journey was to begin on the night of the 20th June.

In her narrative of the flight which Madame Royale subsequently penned, she says that during the whole of the hours of that day "my father and mother seemed very busy and much agitated, but I did not know the reason. After dinner they sent my brother and me into another room, and shut themselves up alone with my aunt. I have since learned it was then that they communicated to her their intention to escape. At five o'clock my mother took my brother and me and two ladies to Tivoli. While walking there my mother took me aside and told me not to be alarmed whatever might happen; that we should never be long separated, and would meet again soon. My mind was confused, and I did not understand what she meant. She kissed me, and said that if the ladies

should ask me why I was so agitated, I should tell them she had scolded me, but that we had made it up again."

The governess, henceforth to pose as the Baroness Korff and the mother of the two children, Madame Royale and the Dauphin, dressed as a girl, managed to reach Fersen's cab in safety, although their hearts must have thumped a great deal as they saw the National Guards on duty in the courtyard. They drove about the quays, and at the appointed time they were in the Rue de l'Échelle, where the remainder of the party joined them after a considerable delay. Before they came Lafayette flashed by. There was a further loss of precious minutes when once the barrier had been passed owing to a misunderstanding as to the exact spot at which the travelling-carriage was to be met. However, it was found in due course, with two loyal Gentlemen of the Guard waiting to act as postilions, and the Count's servants seated on the box, which Fersen himself mounted. In this way Louis the Sixteenth stole out of Paris as the *valet de chambre* of his children's governess; Marie Antoinette, the proud daughter of the Cæsars, as the servant of a Russian Baroness; and her sister-in-law as a maid.

At Bondy, where horses were changed, the captain of the enterprise left them. He had completed his task. "We shall soon meet again, I hope, Monsieur le Comte," said the King. The Gentleman of the Guard who had ridden ahead in order to ensure a relay of fresh horses had also done his work well. There was not the slightest hitch, and the cabriolet containing the Queen's waiting-women—she had foolishly insisted on their coming—joined them a little later. At Meaux, the next posting-station, no delay occurred, and although they were still far from their destination, Baroness Korff's party doubtless began to congratulate themselves on the good fortune that was

attending them. No ill-mannered National Guards, no Assembly, no mob! When they got off the main road they overstepped the bounds of prudence. The Marquise de Tourzel, the Dauphin, and Madame Royale walked a little while, and were joined by the King, who with his usual bonhomie passed the time of day with any peasants he happened to meet. The children, a little tired after so adventurous a night, began to enjoy the novel experience. It was far better fun than being "proper" in the Tuileries. If any of the men to whom Louis spoke recognised him, or thought they saw in the stout man with the round face and the aquiline nose the ruler of France, they did not say so. Neither did the loyal Picard, a postilion at Viels-Maisons; at Chaintrix the postmaster was less discreet, and he and his family paid homage to the royal personages within the berline, as was their due but not their wish. "When we have passed Châlons," his Majesty averred with enthusiasm, "we shall have nothing more to fear!" They arrived at that considerable town late in the afternoon, and Louis was instantly recognised by Viet, the postmaster, and many others. The Mayor was informed of the distinguished visitors who seemed so impatient to leave the place, but, like everybody else who knew the names of at least two of the occupants of the unwieldy coach, he took no action.

The fresh horses got into their stride. Châlons and danger were left behind, so thought Louis, for they were within a few leagues of the military detachments which were to escort them to Montmédy and the frontier army. The troops were under such capable officers as the Duc de Choiseul and Bouillé's son, and no fear was entertained regarding their part of the programme. There was but one rift in the lute, and that apparently unimportant. The berline and the cabriolet had proceeded in the leisurely

way so characteristic of the monarch himself, and were considerably behind time.

At the very first post where Louis had expected to be met by troops he found they had failed him. Somme-Vesle, which was to have been "garrisoned" by the grandson of the famous statesman who had suppressed the order of the Jesuits in France, was absolutely devoid of soldiers. Having waited several hours for the coach which did not appear, and succeeded in arousing the curiosity of the peasants as to the reason why they had been "favoured" by the hussars, Choiseul decided that either the berline had not started, or it had, perhaps together with its occupants, met with misfortune on the way. For some reason best known to himself he left no one at Somme-Vesle to inform the King, should he appear, of the arrangements he had thought well to make, but contented himself with scribbling a note for the information of the officers at Sainte Menehould and Clermont-en-Argonne. This, which was to the effect that the "treasure" was not coming that day, he handed to Léonard, the Queen's hairdresser, who had been entrusted with some of her jewels, and with whom he had journeyed from Paris. When the royal fugitives reached the abandoned post further time was lost by waiting to see if the soldiers would make their appearance. They then pushed on to Sainte Menehould. Captain d'Andoins, of the Royal Dragoons, who was stationed there, had received Choiseul's message and bidden his soldiers unsaddle. Some of the men were standing about chatting and smoking, others were gossiping over glasses of wine when the royal equipage drew up.

The Dauphin had suffered greatly from the heat; for this reason the windows had been lowered so as to catch the passing breeze, and before the post-house at Sainte

Menehould was reached, by some mischance Louis had omitted to draw the blinds. "The King," says a contemporary who imparts the information from one who had it direct from Marie Antoinette herself, "saw a man leaning against a wheel of the carriage, looking at him attentively. He stooped down under the pretext of playing with his children, and told the Queen to draw the blinds in a few moments, without any show of haste. She obeyed, but when he arose the King saw the same man leaning upon the wheel on the other side of the carriage, and examining him closely. The man was holding a coin in his hand,[1] and seemed to be comparing the two profiles, but he said nothing. The King said, 'We are recognised. Shall we be betrayed? It is in God's hands!'" The inquisitive individual was Jean Baptiste Drouet, a retired soldier, and by the grim irony of fate he recognised Louis by the money handed to him by M. de Valory, one of the Gardes du Corps, in payment for the new horses. "That chance glance," said Napoleon, "changed the face of the world."

The following is the account of Drouet's subsequent proceedings as he related them to the Assembly:

"I am the postmaster of Sainte Menehould, formerly a dragoon in the regiment of Condé; my comrade Guillaume was formerly a dragoon of the Queen's regiment.[2] On the 21st of June, at half-past seven o'clock in the evening, two carriages and eleven horses baited at my house: I thought I recognised the Queen; and, perceiving a man at the back part of the carriage on the left, I was struck by the resemblance of his countenance to the King's effigy on an *assignat* of fifty *livres*.

"These carriages were conducted by a detachment of

[1] According to Drouet's own account it was an *assignat*. See under.

[2] Like Drouet, Guillaume was an inn-keeper. His house was the "Boar's Head."

dragoons, which succeeded a detachment of hussars, under pretence of protecting a treasure. This escort confirmed me in my suspicions; particularly when I saw the commander of the detachment speak with great animation to one of the couriers. However, fearing to excite false alarms, being alone, and having no opportunity of consulting anyone, I suffered the carriages to depart; but, seeing immediately the dragoons making preparation to follow them, and observing that after having asked horses for Verdun the carriages took the road to Varennes, I went to my comrade and told him what I had seen, and that I proposed to follow them. He readily offering to accompany me, we instantly mounted our horses, and taking a cross road, arrived before them at Varennes. It was eleven o'clock at night, very dark, and everyone gone to bed. The carriages were stopped in the street by a dispute which had taken place between the postilions and the postmaster of the town. The postmaster was desirous for them to stop and refresh their horses, according to custom; the King, on the contrary, wished to hasten his departure.

"We stopped at the sign of the Golden Arm, and calling for the landlord, M. le Bianc, I took him aside, and said to him, 'Are you a staunch patriot?' 'Don't doubt me,' replied he. 'Well,' said I, 'the King is at Varennes; he must be stopped.' We then alighted, and reflected that in order to secure success to our plan it was necessary to barricade the street and the bridge by which the King was to pass.

"My companion and I then went to the bridge of Varennes. Fortunately we found a carriage there loaded with furniture. We overturned it, so as to render the road impassable. In the meantime Le Bianc had been to the *procureur de la commune*, the mayor, and the

THE FLIGHT OF LOUIS XVI STOPPED AT VARENNES

The progress of the royal carriage was stopped at Varennes at eleven o'clock at night by a carriage overturned across the road by a retired soldier who recognised Louis from his effigy on an *assignat*. The following day the fugitives were compelled to return to Paris.

(*From an aquatint of* 1791 *in the Bibliothèque Nationale*)

commander of the National Guard; and in a few minutes our number was increased to eight men, who were all hearty in the cause.

"The commander of the National Guard, accompanied by the *procureur*, approached the carriage, asked the travellers who they were, and where they were going. The Queen petulantly answered they were in a hurry. A sight of the passport was then demanded. She at length gave her passport to one of the Guards, who alighted and came to the inn.

"When the passport was read some said it was sufficient. We combated this opinion because it was not signed by the president of the National Assembly, as it should have been. 'If you are a foreigner,' said we to the Queen, 'how came you to have sufficient influence to have a detachment to follow you? How came you, when you passed through Clermont, to have sufficient influence to be followed by a first detachment?'

"In consequence of these reflections and our perseverance, it was determined that the travellers should not proceed till the following day. They alighted at the house of the *procureur*. The *procureur* then produced a picture of the King, and asked him if that was not his portrait. His Majesty, then throwing off his disguise, replied: 'My friends, I am indeed your King. I have fled from Paris, from poignards and from bayonets; I have determined to take refuge in the provinces, where I hope to find loyalty and respect. My route is for Montmédy; I have no intention of leaving the kingdom, I entreat you not to impede my journey. These are my wife and children; we conjure you to treat us with that respect which the French have ever shown their kings.'

"The National Guards immediately came in crowds, and at the same time the hussars arrived, sword in hand.

They endeavoured to approach the house where the King was; but we let them know that if they persisted in taking him away they should not tear him from us alive.

"The commander of the National Guard had the precaution to bring up two small field-pieces, which he planted at the upper end of the street, and two others at the lower end, so that the hussars would be between two fires. They were summoned to dismount. M. Jonglas refused. He said that he and his troops would guard the King. He was answered that the National Guard would protect him without his assistance. He persisted in his resolution; upon which the commander of the National Guard gave orders to the gunners to form their ranks and to fire. They took the matches in their hands, but I have the honour to observe to you that the cannons were not then loaded. In a word, the commander of the National Guard, and the troops under him, acted so judiciously that they contrived to disarm the hussars. The King was then made a prisoner."

When it was fully appreciated at Sainte Menehould that the stout man of bourgeois appearance who sat so stolidly in the berline was the monarch of the realm, and that the stately lady who had drawn the green curtains was the Queen, the town officials began to act. The cavalry—save one man—had their horses and accoutrements taken from them; their captain was placed under arrest. The exception was Lagache, the chief quartermaster, who performed a deed entirely worthy of the swashbuckler Marbot. He saddled his horse, charged through the crowd, fired at those who endeavoured to oppose him as he clattered over the bridge, and succeeded in following the royal carriages. It does not say much for the loyalty or bravery of the royalist army of France

that twenty-nine of the thirty dragoons at Sainte Menehould signally failed in their duty on so important an occasion. The only posting-station between that town and Varennes was Clermont, where Louis showed such impatience to be gone that he would not wait for the Comte de Damas and the 180 dragoons stationed there to saddle their horses. Shortly afterwards Damas was informed by Lagache that he had followed two men from Sainte Menehould, but had lost sight of them before reaching Clermont, and that no help was to be expected from the former place. He had the good sense to order a few men to pursue the royal carriage. The soldiers lost their way, and took the road to Verdun. It was not long before rumours reached the villagers that the King had been seen, whereupon his troops deserted him. Damas and a few other officers managed to leave the place, and taking the road to Varennes confidently anticipated coming up with the berline some distance farther on.

At Varennes, Lieutenant Rohrig, a lad of eighteen years, had awaited the coming of the King, had waited in vain, and dismissed his sixty men. As there was no post-house there horses had been sent, with special instructions that they were to be stabled at "The Golden Arm" inn, whereas they had been taken to the more conspicuous Hôtel du Grand Monarque, situated in the most important thoroughfare of the place, where their arrival aroused considerable attention. Bouillé seems to have thought there was likely to be a hitch at Varennes, for he had sent his son, the Chevalier de Bouillé, and the Comte de Raigecourt to superintend operations, and if possible to transfer the horses, which he was unable to do. Who was the great personage who required so many horses? was the universal question, and the persons who

asked it made it their business to find out. The first intimation they had was when the tocsin was rung at the instigation of Sauce, the *procureur*, when Drouet and Guillaume rode into the town after their famous ride. At first Sauce was inclined to allow the Baroness Korff and her party to proceed. The passports were in order, and he saw no reason for detaining the travellers. Drouet's insistence won, however, and some of those who had come up and now surrounded the berline shouted, "It is the King!" The mystery of the post-horses was cleared up; the secret was common property. In order to make quite certain the mayor dragged out of bed a lawyer named Destez, celebrated as having been to Versailles and seen the royal family. When he was somewhat roughly introduced into the King's presence he fell upon his knees. "Ah, sire!" he exclaimed. After that Louis no longer dissembled. He confessed as to his real identity.

Sauce, in addition to being a grocer and *procureur* of the commune, was a gentlemen. He placed his house and his household at the disposal of the fugitives. When Louis ascended the wooden stairs which led to the upper room he had lost hope; the Queen nearly so, for she had already done her best to win over Madame Sauce to her cause in the vain expectation that perhaps she would have sufficient influence over her husband for him to connive at their escape ere dawn should break.

The two little "girls," no longer Amélie and Aglaé but the Dauphin of France and Madame Royale, fell asleep, Louis chatted with the *procureur* and seemed more at ease in his presence than if he had been at the Tuileries discussing affairs of State with a Minister, and Marie Antoinette sat listening for the sound of hoofs that would be at once Bouillé, his troops, and victory. The

cries of the populace, and perhaps the tumbling of timber as the National Guards raised a barricade were the only sounds that reached her ears, now attuned to discord rather than to harmony. The Comte de Damas, the Duc de Choiseul, and his forty hussars who had failed at Somme-Vesle, and a handful of other officers, including the Baron de Goguelat to whom was due the confusion in the matter of relays, reached the King and made what preparations they could to defend the place should it be attacked. A small body of hussars from Dun, numbering in all not more than a hundred men, also made its way to Varennes, but the barrier erected at the bridge was so strong that no attempt against it was made. Damas at once mooted a plan of escape to Louis. It was that the party should mount horses, the King and the Dauphin being together on one animal, and that his men should surround them, and if necessary fight their way through the crowd. He urged speed, believing that in an hour or less his troops would be contaminated by the prevailing popular opinion. "Can you answer for it," said his Majesty, "that in this unequal scuffle of thirty against seven or eight hundred a shot might not kill the Queen, one of the children, or my sister? . . . The municipality does not refuse my passing on, but says I must wait till break of day. Young Bouillé set off, just as I got here, to apprise his father to put the troops in motion; they, no doubt, are ready. Were I here alone, I would do what you advise, and make my way through; but there are the Queen, the two children, my sister, and their ladies, and it is impossible to venture so many with a party so small as yours, a party that must be made still less, for I cannot leave behind me these three gentlemen of the Body Guard. It is now almost one: Bouillé went at half-past eleven; you, too, des-

patched someone when you came.[1] Bouillé has no doubt placed his troops at different distances; those nearest will be first informed of what has happened by his son: they will be here one after another.[2] It is not eight leagues to Stenay, a distance that a man on horseback will go in two hours and a half. Detachments will be coming up all night; Bouillé himself will be here by four or five, and then, without the family's running any risk, and without any violence of any kind, we shall get away in safety. . . .

"Damas and I calculated that the Marquis would be there between five and six," continues the Duc de Choiseul in his account of what happened, "but my forty hussars having seen their sixty comrades join the people, I expected they would soon do the same; and as Damas and I perceived that the trying moment would be when the general and his troops arrived, we made our calculations and arrangements as well as we could to defend the house, and more particularly the staircase, and to contrive that the troops should get possession of the town before we could be all cut down. In this manner we passed the time till it struck five, but with an anxiety that was intolerable. We went out from time to time to observe what the disposition of the people was. On one of these occasions M. de Goguelat was engaged in a scuffle with some of the National Guards, and was severely wounded; but he got dressed, and appeared again (though suffering extremely) before the royal family." According to Choiseul, the commander of the troops from Dun had for some reason or other incurred the displeasure of Bouillé, and when he was admitted, the King merely said that he could give no orders. "You see I am a prisoner. You must

[1] Aubriot.

[2] Those under Rohrig had been sent.

wait for the Marquis. 'Tell him how we are situated: he cannot be long." With these despairing words Louis ended the conversation, and d'Eslon withdrew.

The arrival of Bayon and Romœuf, representatives of the municipality of Paris and of the Assembly, decided the issue of the day. Romœuf was an aide-de-camp of the commander of the National Guards. "Thus Monsieur de Lafayette arrests me a second time," the King is alleged to have said. "He has nothing but the United States in his head," was the Queen's reply; "he will soon see what a French Republic is!" The decree of the Assembly demanding that her husband be brought back, after perusal of which Louis had remarked that there was no longer a King in France, had been placed by him on the bed where the little ones slept. She seized it and flung it to the floor, saying as she did so, "It shall not sully my children!" It was neither wise nor tactful, and therefore in keeping with her whole hapless career.

One incident alone sufficed to relieve the tragedy ere the former fugitives, now the royal prisoners, entered the berline for the return journey. When Sauce's grandmother, an old woman of eighty, heard that the King of France was not only at Varennes but staying at her relative's house, she hobbled over to the place and sought admission. Born in the reign of *le grand Monarque*, she had been taught to venerate the King at Versailles as second only in importance to the Holy Father at the Vatican. She cared nothing for States-General or Assembly, for the days of enlightenment and federations. She curtseyed to Louis and Marie Antoinette—it was the most glorious moment of her life—and turned to see the children, as a good woman instinctively does if there are youngsters about. She broke down when her dim eyes beheld the little heads just visible above the coarse cover-

let. Falling on her knees, she wept. An old woman's blessing had become an aged saint's prayer.

Meanwhile the Comte de Raigecourt and Bouillé's son had made their way to the Marquis, who was then at Stenay. The commander seems to have exerted himself with commendable decision, but there was considerable delay in starting the troops, and the roads were extremely bad and hilly. As a consequence of these misfortunes, which a novelist dealing with creatures of the imagination would attribute to fate, Bouillé and his troops arrived within sight of Varennes two hours after the royal family had left the town which had sealed the destinies of three of them. Bouillé was met by the officer who had commanded at Dun, from whom he heard that although he and his men had made an attempt to get into the place, they had been unsuccessful, and that the garrison of Verdun was siding with the people in their desire to send Louis back to Paris. Tired out with their march, his officers failed to support him in his hope of effecting a rescue, and the force returned to Stenay. "I shall never forget," says the Chevalier de Bouillé, "the affliction painted in my father's countenance; I shall never forget the heart-breaking tone (I had often talked to him of his successful life), the accents of complaint and wretchedness with which he broke the silence, and the grief in which he rode along. 'Well, now,' he said to me, 'will you still talk to me of my good fortune?'" The Marquis then took leave of his men and rode over the frontier into Belgium. After service with the *émigrés* as a humble volunteer, he, like Dumouriez, made his way to London, that home of leaders of lost causes, where he died in the year of Marengo.

On that same night, so fatal to the King, the fortunes of Monsieur, afterwards Louis XVIII, and Madame—the

Comte and Comtesse de Provence—were in the ascendant. We gather from the *Narrative of a Journey to Brussels and Coblenz in* 1791, published in 1823 by the successor of Napoleon, that the document which his brother had left behind was read by him and corrected in several places, but that some of the suggestions were not adopted. His manner of escape was not unlike that of Louis, but he disguised himself as a servant—"the wig was a little too light"—and with the Comte d'Avaray, his trusted chamberlain, and an English groom named Sayers, had no difficulty in leaving the Luxembourg. "My joy at having escaped from my prison, a joy which D'Avaray shared, turned all our thoughts towards gaiety, and, accordingly, our first impulse after crossing the threshold was to sing a verse of the parody of the opera of *Penelope*." Thus with a light heart Monsieur left Paris, to reach Brussels on the 22nd June. Of all the fugitives, Louis and his family were alone unfortunate.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE MASSACRE OF THE CHAMP DE MARS

"Though the rage of republicanism may be overcome, it will be difficult to conquer the disgust the King's conduct has inspired." GOWER.

THE return journey partook somewhat of the nature of a military procession, for at each town the National Guards insisted on carrying out what they considered to be their duty by guarding the route until the next stopping-place was reached. "Ill news travels apace," and although the capital was anxious for the return of the King, whose presence had been regarded on a former occasion as a sure antidote to famine, the people who came to gaze at him in his humility showed that they had lost faith in "the Father of his Country." At Sainte Menehould he was hissed; at Châlons there were signs of loyalty, and Louis heard mass; at Épernay, near which they were met by Pétion, Latour-Maubourg, and Barnave, who had been sent by the Assembly to bring him back safely, it was quite the reverse; at Dormans, where the night of the 23rd was spent, the hours before the dawn were rendered hideous by a howling mob. Their last resting-place was Meaux, where they slept at the Bishop's palace.

The Queen made a great impression on Barnave, hitherto an acknowledged enemy of the Court. From thenceforth he endeavoured to play the part of a Mirabeau, advising her on this, counselling her on that, and showing by his conduct a chivalry not unworthy of

the Swedish Count who had ridden out of Paris with the Queen.

He has left us particulars of the conversation which he and the other commissioners had with Louis regarding the motives which had prompted the flight from the Tuileries. "The outrages and menaces which were practised against me and my family on the 18th April," he said, "were the cause of my quitting Paris. Many writers had endeavoured to excite the people to violence against my person and family. There appeared to be no more safety or even consideration for me in this city. I never intended to leave the kingdom; I have never entered into any plan for the furtherance of such an object, neither with foreign powers, with any relations, nor with any of the *émigrés*. As a proof of my intentions, I can assure you lodgings were prepared for me at Montmédy. I chose the place because, being fortified, my family would be in greater security, and because, being near the frontier, I would have been better prepared to oppose any invasion of France if any had been attempted. One of my principal motives in quitting Paris was to destroy the argument of my want of freedom, which might have given occasion to disturbances. If I had had the intention of quitting the kingdom, I should not have published my declaration on the very day of my departure; I should have waited till I was beyond the frontiers, but I always retained the desire of returning to Paris. . . . I only informed Monsieur of my intended departure a very short time before it took place. Monsieur went into a foreign country because he had agreed with me that we should not take the same road; it was his intention to return to France after me. . . . I observed in my journey that public opinion was in favour of the constitution. I could not form an idea

of the public opinion of Paris; but from the remarks I have personally heard on my journey, I am convinced how necessary it is for the support of the Constitution to give strength to the established authorities for the maintenance of public order. . . . The happiness of the people has always been the object of my desires. I shall willingly forget all the troubles I have experienced if I can promote the welfare of the nation."

Instead of a howling mob awaiting them when they approached Paris on the evening of the 25th, there were sullen faces and silence. Placards announcing that "Whoever applauds the King shall be flogged; whoever insults him will be hanged," had been liberally posted throughout the city, and had the desired effect, save only in the garden of the Tuileries, into which some of the people managed to force their way. Madame de Staël calls it "a mournful entry," and adds that "the clothes of the King and Queen were covered with dust; the two children of the royal family looked with surprise on the mass of people who came forth with an air of command into the presence of its fallen masters. Madame Elizabeth appeared in the midst of this illustrious family like a being already sanctified and which has no longer anything in common with the world. . . . It was thus that the King returned to the palace of his ancestors. Alas, what a sad presage, and how truly was it fulfilled!"

Prudhomme, in his newspaper *Révolutions de Paris*, tells us that at seven o'clock on the morning of the 21st, the news of the King's flight was being circulated from mouth to mouth throughout Paris. A crowd flocked to the Tuileries and to the hall occupied by the National Assembly, only to find that what many had believed a mere canard was an accomplished fact. None of the

sentries stationed in the palace attempted to prevent the people from rushing helter-skelter through the rooms and the long corridors to satisfy themselves that there was no mistake. The people, says Prudhomme, "contented themselves with making sport, in their own way, of royalty and of the man who was invested with it. The portrait of the King was taken down from its place of honour and hung on the door. A fruit woman took possession of Antoinette's bed, and used it to display her cherries, saying, 'It's the nation's turn to be comfortable.' A young girl refused to let them put the Queen's bonnet on her head, and trampled on it with indignation and contempt. They had more respect for the Dauphin's study—but we should blush to report the titles of the books which his mother had selected."[1]

The National Guards were ready to cope with any trouble that might arise—in one *faubourg* 2000 pikemen were enrolled—and the women helped the men to guard the city gates, saying, "It was the women who brought the King to Paris, and the men who let him escape." "But do not boast too loudly, ladies," is Prudhomme's witty comment; "it was not much of a present, after all." He adds that busts of the King were destroyed, and that pictures or shop-signs having on them the words "King," "Queen," "royal," "Bourbon," "Louis," "Court," "Monsieur," and so on, were effaced.

Pasquier calls the news of the flight "unexpected," which is not strictly correct, and he says that at first "no one entertained any doubt as to the successful result of the undertaking" because it was believed that steps had been taken to ensure it. Whether it was Louis's intention to cross the frontier or not made no difference

[1] A gross canard, of course. Marie Antoinette was particularly careful in the choice of reading matter for the Dauphin.

to the citizens of Paris, who "considered their position a most critical one. They had always looked upon the presence of the King in their midst as a guarantee against the danger and the acts of vengeance which might threaten them."

The President of the Assembly at the moment—the post was held for a fortnight only—was Alexandre de Beauharnais, the husband of the beautiful Creole who afterwards became the Empress Josephine. He it was who officially informed the deputies that Louis had left the Tuileries. The meetings of the Assembly were declared permanent, and the Ministers were immediately summoned to attend and to carry on their duties in an adjoining apartment. Shortly afterwards the manifesto left by the King was handed in and read to the deputies. In it Louis cancelled his assent to the decrees of the National Assembly made since the Royal Session (June 23, 1789), because his signature had been given under pressure and when he was not a free agent, and he urged the necessity for a modified constitution. The reply of the deputies was to despatch couriers to various municipalities authorising the detention of the King should he pass through their towns, the handing over of the Seal of State to the Minister of Justice, the decision that the monarch's sanction to decrees should be dispensed with, and the sending of a note to the Powers that as regards foreign affairs France remained as before. The Assembly, the Department, and the Municipality worked in perfect harmony.

On the evening of the 21st June Pasquier dined with Beauharnais, Barnave, Menou, Lameth, and Saint-Fargeau. Their conversation, the first-mentioned informs us in his valuable *Memoirs*, "bore all the characteristics of absolute discouragement. They did not know which

way to turn, and I saw plainly that they were completely in the dark as to the road taken by the King. Hence it is that I am convinced that M. de La Fayette, with whom they were all on terms of intimacy, was equally ignorant of it, and that all the surmises which have been indulged in on this score rest upon no foundation whatever." The same informant gives us some valuable particulars regarding Saint-Fargeau, who had hitherto maintained silence save on one or two occasions at the sittings of the Assembly. At the club which he frequented political topics were invariably avoided by him, his main occupation being billiards, at which he lost considerable sums of money.

According to Pasquier, Beauharnais and Menou remarked that too great pressure had been brought to bear on Louis, whereupon the assembled company was "greatly surprised" to hear Saint-Fargeau "break out into the most vehement invectives against both King and Queen. In vain did his colleagues try to calm him down, and to bring to his comprehension that the time for wisdom and moderation was at hand; their efforts were fruitless. He rose from the table and left the dining-room with all the signs of a furious anger. Such was the man who, later on, not only voted the death of Louis XVI, but who, through his zeal in securing votes to that end, contributed more than any other man towards compassing it. The day after the scene which I have described, he resumed his phlegmatic appearance, and seemed to think of nothing but his game of billiards. So he remained until the 10th of August 1792. From that date we never met again."

It was Mangin, who combined the professions of lawyer and apothecary at Varennes, and was the son of a deputy, who first brought the news of the King's arrest

to the awaiting and perfectly calm Assembly. Three commissioners, charged with the safe return of the monarch, were at once appointed, with what result we have already seen. The doors of the Tuileries were sealed, the King's papers secured, all communications that came to hand for those concerned in the plot were retained. A military officer was sent off post-haste to examine the fortresses of the frontier—his report was anything but pleasing—and some 300,000 of the National Guard were to be *en activité*. Paris itself was like a besieged city, from which none could make exit unless by order of the commanding officer. The barriers were closed; Beauharnais alone had the right to give permission to go without the gates. About the same time as the King was hearing mass at Châlons, Lafayette and his National Guards were swearing "to obey no orders save those given in accordance with the decrees of the National Assembly."

Within a few hours of his return, the King's exercise of executive power was provisionally suspended until the completion of the constitution, his person was securely guarded, and three commissioners—namely, Adrien Duport, Tronchet, and D'André—were appointed to interrogate him and Marie Antoinette. The frustrated flight of the King was an excuse, and a very logical one, for the believers in republicanism to renew their strength. Some regarded the revocation of the decrees by Louis in his manifesto as synonymous with abdication; the more rabid journalists of the type of Prudhomme, Marat, and Brissot openly preached republicanism and the paramount importance of the sovereign will of the people. Condorcet, the disciple of Voltaire, espoused the same cause. Yet it was not the fiery Marat, his equally inflammable *Ami du Peuple*, nor even the Jacobin Club

that voiced, in a manner which compelled official attention, the growing demand of a certain section of the populace for a country without a monarch. The Cordeliers Club did that in an address presented to the Assembly on the 22nd June. In its opinion a king, "above all an hereditary king," was incompatible with liberty. It was confidently anticipated that the members of the Jacobin Club would support this petition for the abolition of the monarchy hip and thigh. They did nothing of the kind. When an endeavour was made to read it to them they hissed and passed a vote in favour of the constitution and the King. Two days later 30,000 people met in the Place Vendôme to petition the Assembly to consult the departments in the matter of the King's position.

It soon became evident that Duport, Barnave, and Charles Lameth, the acknowledged leaders of the Left, and known as the Triumvirate, were adopting a far less democratic policy than they had hitherto pursued. They seemed to be bent on supporting the King. Gower notes with a cynicism unworthy of him, although there may be a substratum of truth in what he suggests, that they had shown "before the late event, an inclination to change their system of politics, in order to preserve their importance: the present state of things has afforded them an opportunity of adopting a new line of conduct, and a sort of coalition has taken place between them and the aristocratic party which will probably not last long." Marie Antoinette recovered something of her old buoyancy of disposition when she came to see that the King had not altogether forfeited the respect of his country, and declared at the end of July that the aspect of affairs was "much more hopeful." Although the clubs and the people had influenced the voting of the deputies, the Assembly as a whole had never shown itself attached

heart and soul to the aspirations of democracy. It refused to take further notice of the petition of the Cordeliers, and when the committee entrusted with the drawing up of a report on the flight to Varennes stated that they neither recommended that Louis be brought up for trial nor dethroned, it would have nothing to do with the demand of the club that the matter should be referred to the nation. Robespierre argued that to admit the inviolability of the King for acts which were personal to himself was to establish a god upon earth; Barnave that the trial of Louis would be the proclamation of a republic and the destruction of a constitution which had been framed with so much care. "Be assured," he said, "that those who now propose to pass sentence on the King will do the same to yourselves when you first thwart their ambition. If you prolong the Revolution it will increase in violence. . . . The world hitherto has been astounded by the powers we have developed; let it now be charmed by the gentleness which graces them." The report was adopted by an overwhelming majority, but it was decreed that should Louis fail to accept the constitution, if he put himself at the head of an armed force for use against the nation, or consented that anyone else should do so in his behalf, he would be considered as having abdicated, and would be held responsible for his acts as an ordinary citizen.

These provisions in the contract between the monarch and his people, or rather between the people and their King, were sufficiently stringent for those, mainly of the middle class, who believed that the motto of the Revolution should be moderation. The Cordeliers were not of this persuasion, and their friends of the Jacobins showed themselves perfectly willing to co-operate with them in requesting that the departments, and not the

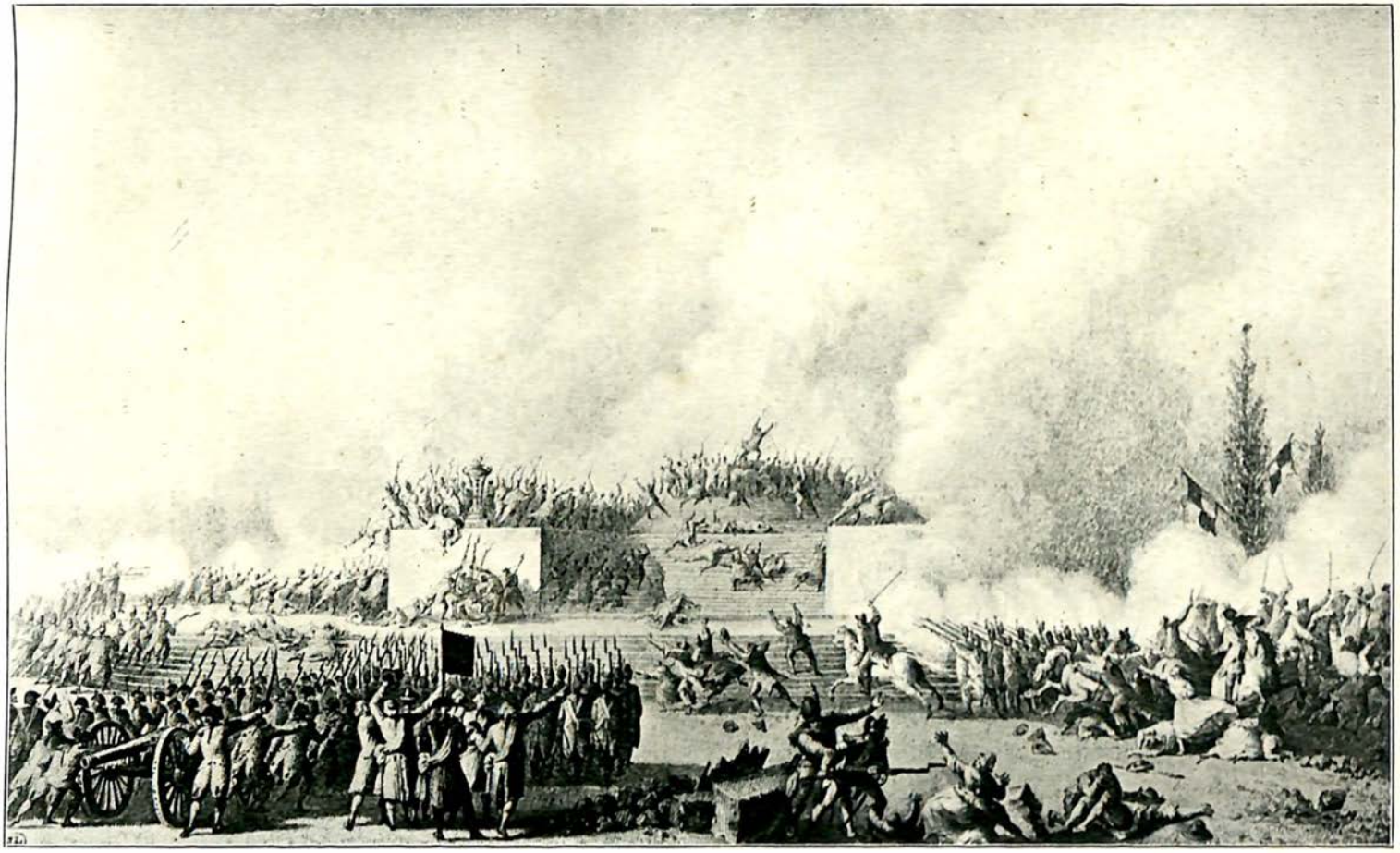
National Assembly only, be asked to vote on the matter of the King's position. All this agitation was well timed. On the 14th July, the second anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, a large number of people, including some from the country, gathered together in the Champ de Mars as they had done the previous year. There was a procession, and a Te Deum was sung before the Altar of the Country. "In the Champ de Mars yesterday," says Francis Moore, an eye-witness, "the greatest order was preserved, which, considering the prodigious concourse of people, surprised me a good deal. I was very much gratified with this scene, and the more so as I went along with their joy, and felt that it was a natural and proper occasion of national exultation."

Two days later a petition drawn up by Danton, Brissot, Sergent, Ducanel, and Lanthanas expressing the wish that the King should be considered as having abdicated, and urging the necessity of a substitute and the election of a new National Assembly was placed on the altar for signature by all who cared to do so before it was presented to the deputies. When the news arrived that the Assembly had not deposed Louis, the document was withdrawn by the Jacobins. On the following day, Sunday the 17th July, a new petition, this time from the Cordeliers, and bearing the signatures of Robert, Vachard, Peyre, and Demoy, found a resting-place on the altar. Bailly gave notice that if a crowd collected in the Champ de Mars it would be summarily dealt with. The mob came, in part probably because of the threat, attached their names to the document by the thousand, and got out of hand. At the Gros Cailloux two men, believed to be spies, were put to death because it was rumoured that they were about to blow up the *Autel de la Patrie.* The heads of the unfortunate individuals were struck off and

impaled on pikes, and together with their bodies were taken in procession.

When the Mayor was informed of these happenings, the red flag was flown from the Hôtel de Ville and martial law proclaimed. Bailly, together with Lafayette and some of the National Guard, made their way to the field consecrated to fraternity. The people were warned that if they did not disperse the Guards would fire. It is said that Bailly did not succeed in making himself heard above the hubbub, which is not surprising, but it is obvious that the red flag was conspicuous to some at least of the frenzied folk who pushed and jostled each other in an endeavour to find out what was happening, for there were frantic yells of "*À bas le drapeau rouge! À bas les baïonnettes!*" Some contemporary accounts relate that the Guards were pelted with stones before the order was given to them to fire above the heads of the dense mass, and a statement to that effect was made in the Assembly. Others protest that it was *vice versâ*. We know for certain that muskets were levelled on this memorable Sunday, and that some twenty men and women were killed, while many others were wounded or taken to prison. The people, now fully realising that Lafayette and Bailly were in earnest, began to scatter in all directions. In the mad rush to get away between two and three hundred of them, including little children, met their deaths or were injured. In the words of Mignet, the disturbances of the 17th July 1791 were "the prelude of the popular movements which led to the 10th August (1792)."

Louis, writes an observant Englishman who was in Paris at the time, "has irretrievably forfeited whatever hold he had of the confidence and affection of the people, and, at the same time, encouraged the Jacobins entirely



THE "MASSACRE" FOLLOWING THE DECLARATION OF MARTIAL LAW ON THE CHAMP DE MARS, JULY 17, 1791

(*From the original drawing by Prieur in the Louvre*)

to throw off the mask, and boldly to bring forward their wild republican doctrines, even in the National Assembly, where, although there is hitherto a great majority in favour of the present constitution, yet there is much reason to apprehend that these Bedlamites (amongst whom it cannot be denied there are men of considerable ability, and who are employing incredible industry to acquire proselytes, by disseminating in all the departments, and indeed throughout all Europe, the most licentious publications) will acquire the ascendency in the next, and indeed, even supposing this should not be the case, and the next Assembly should prove no less favourable to monarchy than the present, the King will not now, I fear, be able to acquire that degree of influence which I am inclined to think he might have done had he not attempted his escape."

The "Massacre of the Champ de Mars," as the Jacobins termed it with persistent reiteration, had important and far-reaching consequences. Neither Bailly nor Lafayette, both in sympathy with the revolutionary movement within certain fixed limits, regained their early popularity with the masses; the National Guard was definitely associated with the *bourgeoisie*, and the lower classes felt that their only friends were the Jacobins and the Cordeliers. At the moment the monarchists had triumphed. Many of the democrats were arrested; others were sought for but eluded detection. Danton went first into the country, and then, knowing that a warrant had been issued against him, escaped to London. With few exceptions those deputies of the Left who had been members of the Jacobin Club joined the organisation of the Constitutionalists known as the Feuillant Club, or, to give it its real name, *La Société des Amis de la Patrie*—some for no lengthy period. Robespierre, a name ever looming

larger in the public eye, Buzot, Pétion, Roederer, Boyer, and Corroller alone remained at the moment. The Cordeliers was shut by authority, and the busy pen of Camille Desmoulins had perforce to take a rest on account of the suppression of the Radical newspapers. Sedition ceased to be preached in the Palais Royal, not because the orators failed to put in an appearance, but on account of the unwelcome presence of the National Guard. The Duke of Orleans paraded, but got no further to being proclaimed regent than the humblest peasant in Brittany. Now, if ever, was the psychological moment for the entrance into the political arena of a statesman bent on the preservation of law and order, a second Mirabeau. He came in Georges Jacques Danton, "the King of the Market Place," and he it was, in the words of Lord Acton, who wrought "the greatest change in the modern world." Born at Arcis-sur-Aube, in Champagne, a decade save a few months before Napoleon, he had been intended for the Church, to become in turn a successful lawyer, a member of the Directory of the Department of Paris, the moving spirit of the Cordeliers, one of the leaders of the Jacobins, a herald of the Republic, and a prime mover in the establishing of the Revolutionary Tribunal. As he said on the first day of his trial, a little less than three years later, he was "not unknown among the revolutionaries." His face, uglier than that of Mirabeau and pitted with the small-pox, was "radiant with intellect," says Lamartine—a statement far more truthful than that of Madame Roland, who called him illiterate, which he most certainly was not, unless a Frenchman who has a knowledge of English, Italian, Latin, and Greek comes under that category. He it was who, by the magic of his eloquence, proved that the tongue can be a mightier weapon than pen or sword, and by his fervid enthusiasm

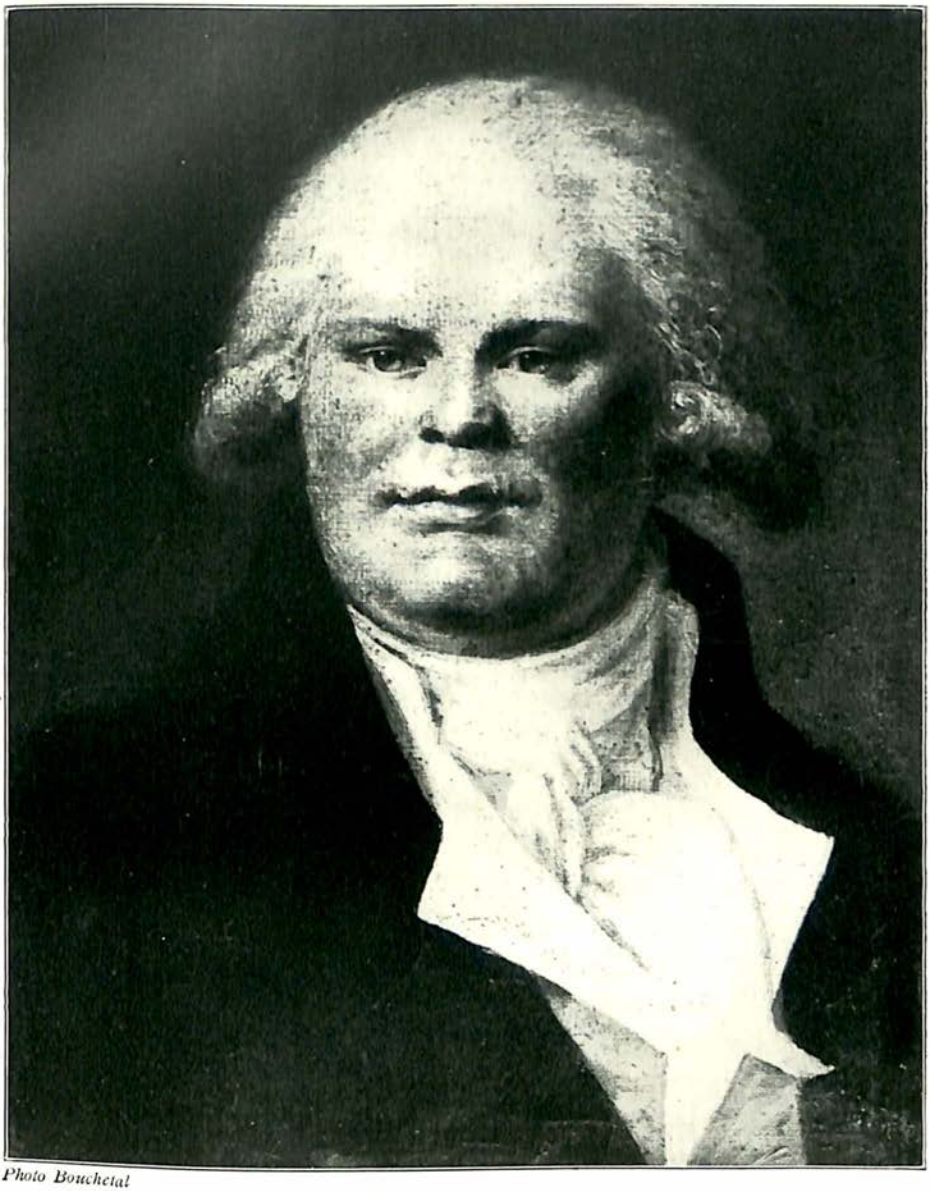


Photo Bouchetal

GEORGES JACQUES DANTON (1759–1794)

(*From a painting in the Carnavalet Museum*)

and capacity for work helped to hurl back the enemies of France. His methods are ably summed up in the pregnant phrases, "There is no time to be lost," and "Every minute counts," which occur in one of his speeches that aroused the Fatherland as a bugle-call the camp. His policy was given in miniature form in his pronouncement of the 2nd September 1792: "To conquer, what do we need? Audacity, yet more audacity, always audacity!" Unfortunately for Louis, he came not to fulfil the urgent necessity of the constitutional monarchists for a strong man, but to destroy; and he lived long enough to admit, although it was almost a dying confession, that he was "leaving everything at sixes and sevens; one had better be a poor fisherman than meddle with the art of governing men!"

Within a month of the Massacre of the Champ de Mars, Paris was as frivolous as ever. "Do not suppose we are dull," writes a member of the Jacobin party on the 25th August; "the capital was never more brilliant, more noisy, more magnificent, more opulent. Never at any moment was there more dancing or more dissipation of all sorts, and that in the midst of the direst poverty, and the most terrible scarcity of money. Our national French gaiety remains with us, and tempers all our misfortunes."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE CONSTITUTION AND THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

"While everyone is pestering us with new principles of all kinds, how is it overlooked that stability is also a principle of government?" DUPORT.

THE constitution which was the hope of France, and on which so many weary months had been expended by the various committees charged with this important task, was to all intents and purposes finished. Recent events had inclined the Assembly to take a somewhat more conservative view of things, and to endeavour, if possible, to allay the fears of those who discerned in the machinations of the Jacobins, the Cordeliers, and kindred organisations, the eventual triumph of disorder. It was therefore decided that the work of the constitution-makers should be read before the deputies that they might make any revision deemed necessary before the complete article was presented to the King for his acceptance.

Barnave, Duport, and the Lameths seized the opportunity in a well-meant but entirely unsuccessful way to strengthen the executive, to restore the absolute veto of the Crown, and to place some kind of restrictive measure on the freedom of the Press, promulgated in the previous year, and which had been used to such conspicuous advantage by the advanced revolutionists. "You are inclined to efface some blemishes," counselled Malouet; "go a step further, and correct some deformities." The greatest victory—partial, short-lived, but still a victory—was that won by Le Chapelier over the political

clubs. He demanded that in future they should not be allowed to form close alliances, and if they sought to influence public opinion on elections or to interfere with the concerns of the nation, they should be immediately suppressed. Most of the concessions made, however, were half-measures, and as such almost worthless. Lally-Tollendal, with the example of England's legislature before him, had warned the States-General before the last stones of the Bastille had been torn down that "with one chamber you can destroy everything; without two chambers you can found nothing." The hint was disregarded, though afterwards it was remembered in sorrow. The work of law-making was to be carried on by one House only, elected for two years by those who had a property qualification, which, of course, excluded a considerable proportion of the population. Thus, in the words of Duport, France was "exposed every two years to a revolution in her laws and opinions."

It is unnecessary to repeat the decrees passed by the Assembly and embodied in the constitution, for reference has been made to them in previous pages. Its main features were equality and decentralisation—the very antitheses of the age of Louis XIV. The weakening of the executive power was regarded as of paramount importance to the freedom of the deliberations of the Assembly. Its prerogatives had already been encroached upon by the various committees, and were to become practically nominal. No deputy was allowed to hold office under the Crown, although the King's Ministers, who continued to be named by him, could sit in the chamber. When it is remembered that these legislators of the Constituent Assembly, as the National Assembly had been called since the 9th July 1789, were absolutely inexperienced, that they had no precedent on which to base their method of

procedure, that the times were "like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh," that their deliberations were undoubtedly affected by outside influence, it is praiseworthy that they succeeded in formulating a system of government at all. Many of the evils of the *ancien régime* were abandoned, and a new Reformation which was to affect many other countries had begun. At the gathering in the Tennis Court at Versailles the National Assembly had regarded itself "as called upon to establish the constitution of the kingdom, effect a regeneration of the State, and maintain the true principles of monarchy." It had created a constitution, which it decreed could not be suspended for thirty years, but not established it, carried out many important reforms, and would perhaps have fulfilled the last-mentioned proposition—obviously an abstract one—had there been more sympathy between Louis and the Three Estates.

"Its labours," says Chateaubriand in his *Autobiography*, "are like those of the great physician of antiquity, which at the same time removed farther forward and fixed anew the limits of science." "While the results of the labours of the Assembly may be condemned," writes Professor H. Morse Stephens in his truly great, but unfortunately incomplete, *History of the French Revolution*, "and the faults and mistakes of the men who sat there may be clearly visible to modern eyes, yet all due credit must be given them for good intentions and a real longing to do what seemed to them right and just. Much that they did has never been undone. France can never again become a conglomeration of provinces, each with its own dialect and its own laws; and it was the Constituent Assembly which began the great work of making the inhabitants of France Frenchmen, and not Provençals or Picards, which first gave to all France

THE KING ACCEPTS THE CONSTITUTION, SEPTEMBER 14, 1791

(*After the allegorical painting by Le Jeune*)

one common system of laws, and one just repartition of taxes, and, above all, which guaranteed to every Frenchman of every class, as long as he did not break the laws, the priceless boon of personal freedom. . . ." This is some indication of how far we have travelled on the road of historical research and right judgment since Edmund Burke gave it as his opinion in his *Reflections* that "the improvements of the National Assembly are superficial, their errors fundamental." "The glory of heroism," replied his great protagonist in *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, "and the splendour of conquest, have long enough been the patrimony of that great nation. It is time that it should seek a new glory, and a new splendour, under the shade of freedom, in cultivating the arts of peace, and extending the happiness of mankind. Happy if the example of that 'manifesto of humanity,' which has been adopted by the legislators of France into their constitutional code, made an adequate impression on surrounding nations." In which matter James Mackintosh was most emphatically mistaken.

A question fraught with some anxiety still remained to be answered on the completion of the *Acte Constitutionnel*. Would Louis, whose provisional suspension was now rescinded, accept it? The sixty members of the Assembly who formed the deputation charged with its presentation to the King must have left the Tuileries with mixed feelings. He assured them that he intended to remain in Paris, and would examine the Articles without unnecessary delay. At the reception of the representatives of foreign Powers, Gower noticed that although Marie Antoinette welcomed them with "her usual dignity," her "deportment and appearance discovered a mind suffering under affliction, but not easily subdued." A little over a week after having received the document of regeneration,

Louis wrote to the President of the Assembly that he accepted it, "and engaged to maintain it at home, to defend it from all attacks from abroad, and to enforce its execution by all the means it placed at his disposal." With great good feeling, and as a happy augury of the new era, he expressed the wish that a general amnesty should be granted to all who had been arrested or imprisoned on account of acts committed in connection with the Revolution or the flight to Varennes, and that *émigrés* who returned should also be pardoned. This was decreed, and we find Danton reappearing at the Jacobins in the second week of September. On the 14th of that month, 1791, Louis formally accepted the constitution in the hall of the Assembly. His going and return were marked by immense enthusiasm on the part of the citizens as the coronation coach in which he was seated wended its way along a route chosen with the idea of enabling the greatest number of people to see him without undue discomfort. When his Majesty entered the Salle du Manège, the deputies received him standing and uncovered, and they continued in this position during part of the time he was taking the oath. A slight disturbance made him look up, to find that they were all seated. He did the same, and concluded his testament reclining in the chair that had been placed for him to the left of the President, the while Marie Antoinette, Madame Royale, and the Dauphin watched him from a neighbouring box. The Tuileries were illuminated, fireworks were let off in the Champs Elysées by order of the municipality, and the King and Queen once again took an interest in the social affairs of the capital by going to the Opera.

"Their entrance into the house," says one who was present, "was the signal for sincere and universal plaudits. The piece was *The Ballet of Psyche;* at the time that

the furies were dancing and shaking their flambeaux, and when the brilliancy of the flames spread all over the house, I marked the faces of the King and Queen by the pale light of this imitation of the lower regions, and was seized with melancholy forebodings of the future. The Queen exerted herself to be agreeable, but a profound grief was perceptible, even in her obliging smile. The King, as usual, seemed more engaged with what he saw than with what he felt; he looked on all sides with calmness, one might almost say with indifference. . . ."

Bertrand de Moleville tells us that in a conversation he had with the King, the latter stated that while he felt the constitution had great defects, he would be strictly faithful to his oath, "and more particularly so because I believe that the most exact execution of the constitution is the surest method of making its defects known to the nation, and of bringing about such reforms as it may require. I have, and can have, no other plan than this. I shall never deviate from it myself, and it is my desire that the conduct of my ministers should be conformable to it also." He told D'Osmond it was "unworkable." Marie Antoinette called it "monstrous," and "a tissue of absurdities."

One of the foolish errors of the first National Assembly was the self-denying ordinance that none of the deputies could seek re-election in its successor, for now that it had given a political system to France, its work was done. At its final meeting Louis, according to one of the listeners, addressed those who had first met him as the States-General in a manner "worthy of Henry IV." He spoke of their long and arduous career and the indefatigable zeal they had displayed, and urged upon them the importance of explaining the laws they had made to their fellow-citizens, and "to improve and unite all opinions by the

example you shall afford of your love of order and of submission to the laws. Tell them all," he urged, "that the King will always be their first and most faithful friend, that he needs their love, that he can only be happy with them and by their assistance. The hope of contributing to their happiness will sustain my courage, as the satisfaction of having succeeded will be my sweetest recompense."

"History," says Madame de Staël, "ought to consider the Constituent Assembly from two points of view: the abuses destroyed, the institutions created. Seen from the first point of view, the Constituent Assembly has very great claims to the gratitude of mankind; from the second, the most serious faults may be objected to the Assembly." Under the latter category Necker's talented daughter more particularly refers to the gradual usurpation of the executive power, the question of the absolute veto, and the failure to form a second chamber.

As to the constitution, "so good in its foundation, and so bad in its superstructure," it was to last a little over a year. Had some of those who had helped to frame it been allowed to sit in the forthcoming Legislative Assembly, some degree of stability might have been given to the ship of State. Most of the 740 deputies had not entered their thirtieth year, and were, of course, inexperienced. Youth is usually inclined to liberal opinions, and there can be no question that the Jacobin clubs scattered throughout the country had considerable influence on the elections. Yet at their first meeting on the 1st October 1791, the more advanced parties, which included the Jacobins—known as the Mountain because of the high seats they occupied—and the Girondists, who represented the better side of the revolutionary movement, and were so called because several of their leading lights

came from the department of the Gironde, were fewer by some twenty that the constitutional Feuillants and the out-and-out Monarchists. The Feuillants and the supporters of the monarchy now formed the Right, and were looked upon with favour by the *bourgeoisie*, and to a certain extent by the National Guards. It was the Centre, made up for the most part of deputies having a leaning towards moderation, and whose opinions were therefore not sufficiently definite to warrant their joining a distinct party, that was to decide the issue.

Almost from the first it was evident that the Left was destined to become paramount, because it had a definite policy which it rigidly pursued, whereas the Right was divided into different camps. Both parties had their organisations outside the Assembly, but while the Jacobins and Girondists waxed strong, the Feuillant Club soon fell foul of Pétion, the Radical Mayor of Paris who had succeeded Bailly, and its members were turned out of the building they occupied by order of the Assembly. Although Barnave, Duport, and Alexander Lameth did their utmost to influence the King, their advice received less serious attention than did that of Mirabeau before them. The Right had clever men in Dumas, Bigot, Vaublanc, Jaucourt, and Ramond, but they were more than balanced by Brissot, the most popular of the leaders of the Girondists and editor of *Le Patriote Français*, Vergniaud, Gensonné, and Guadet, young barristers of Bordeaux, Isnard, Chabot, Condorcet, Valazé, Fauchet, Couthon, and Merlin de Thionville of the Left, some of whom were so eloquent that their oratory won many a vote from the Centre that might otherwise have gone to their opponents. Madame Roland, who had carried her copy of Plutarch's *Lives* to church when she was nine years old, and had brought herself up on the republics of

classic antiquity, was the life and soul of the party. At the democratic clubs Robespierre, Camille Desmoulins, Danton, Billaud-Varennes, Collot d'Herbois, Fabre d'Églantine, Marat, and others, including Santerre, the wealthy brewer, aided and abetted the pro-revolutionary faction.

MADAME MANON JEANNE ROLAND (1754–1793)

(From an original drawing in crayon and water-colour made at the Conciergerie and now in the Hennin Collection. Reproduced by special permission of the French Government)

CHAPTER XXV

THE ENEMIES AT THE GATE

"*The emigration . . . and not decrees, destroyed the nobility.*"—FRÉNILLY.

Two pressing problems, that of the *émigrés* and of the non-juring clergy, claimed the immediate attention of the Legislative Assembly. It will be remembered that soon after the meeting of the States-General, many of the nobles, instead of supporting Louis, had shaken the dust of France from their feet and settled in such congenial places as Turin, Brussels, Spa, and London. These aristocrats included the Comte d'Artois, the King's youngest brother, and later Monsieur the Comte de Provence, who had fled at the time of the ill-fated journey to Varennes and established a Court near Coblentz. At Worms the Prince de Condé was concentrating a more or less nondescript army of some 20,000 men, which now gave cause for some alarm because its movements might at any time precipitate war. Unsupported the *émigrés* could achieve nothing, and realising this they had already begun a long course of intrigue with various Powers and the petty princes of Germany in the hope of getting them to interfere with the course of events in France.

Let us get some idea of the condition of Europe at the moment. Not a few monarchs had begun, even before 1789, to put their houses in order, either of their own accord or through the influence of an enlightened Minister of State. The fundamental difference in their case was that reform came from above—in other words, it descended

from the sovereign to his subjects—whereas in France it was volcano-like, and worked upwards. Frederick the Great, who had died in 1786, was a reformer; the reigning monarch, Frederick William II, was a reactionary. Joseph II, who, with all his absolutism, had ameliorated the condition of the peasantry in Bohemia, Moravia, Hungary, and Galicia, was a benevolent despot. In 1790 he was succeeded by his brother Leopold, who had already carried out a number of sane liberal projects in his dukedom of Tuscany. When Charles IV came to the throne of Spain in 1788 he followed a far more able man who had struggled to save his country from decay. Influenced by his consort, Marie Louise of Parma, and her lover Godoy, the reign of Charles was retrograde, and was terminated by the mailed fist of Napoleon. The Empress Catherine of Russia, whom Diderot had professed to admire, was fully occupied with her own affairs, and gave but little attention to revolutionary France. She had too many of the characteristics of a man, and an unscrupulous one at that, to grieve over the misfortunes of so weak-minded an individual as Louis. "The King," she wrote on one occasion, "is a good sort of man, and I would like to aid him, but one cannot help a man who will not be helped." As for the National Assembly, she called it "a hydra with 1200 heads," and cynically recommended the recall of the Jesuits as a counter-irritant. Poland, patriotic enough in a certain sense, was torn by internal dissensions. In Holland the Stadholder was the avowed enemy of France, but many of the people ruled by him were strongly in sympathy with the Revolution until it carried war into their own territory. Of all the European sovereigns Gustave III of Sweden alone showed real sympathy with Louis, whom he regarded as "a comrade in misfortune." He went so far as to endeavour to form

a maritime league with Russia and Denmark, but to no effect, and in the summer of 1791 recalled all the Swedish officers in the French service. This increased the alarm of an invasion from Germany, for which the French nation was not prepared at that stage of the Revolution. Some of the ruling princes viewed the condition of affairs in France with equanimity; others were less confident, and either hesitated to express an opinion or frankly confessed that there was no knowing what might happen if the people were allowed to get the upper hand. In England George III was inclined to take a more serious view of affairs than was Pitt, who in 1784 had conversed with Marie Antoinette at Fontainebleau and heard her say in farewell, "*Je suis charmée de vous voir et de vous avoir vu.*" While Chatham's son did not rejoice with Fox and Sheridan over the fall of the Bastille or go to the opposite extreme with Burke, he believed that the events of 1789 in Paris heralded social regeneration in France.

"The present convulsions of France," he avowed in February 1790, "must sooner or later terminate in general harmony and regular order; and though such a situation may make her more formidable, it may also make her less obnoxious as a neighbour. I wish for the restoration of tranquillity in that country, although it appears to me to be distant. Whenever her system shall have become restored, if it shall prove freedom rightly understood, freedom resulting from good order and good government, France will stand forth as one of the most brilliant Powers in Europe. Nor can I regard with envious eyes any approximation in neighbouring States to those sentiments which are the characteristics of every British subject."

Even when such men as Dr. Priestley and Dr. Price were causing their colleagues some uneasiness owing to their

warm support of republican principles, Pitt told Burke that he did not fear a revolution in England. "Depend on it," he assured the philosopher of Gregories, "we shall go on as we are until the day of judgment."

The unwieldy Holy Roman Empire, with its free cities and ecclesiastical principalities, its Chamber, Aulic Council, and Diet, was really made up of a number of States which recognised the Emperor but were to all intents and purposes practically independent. It was, indeed, almost within a decade of dissolution, and the feudatories rather welcomed the Revolution than otherwise. As King of Bohemia and Hungary Leopold ruled over a conglomeration of States and peoples almost as disunited as the Empire, and Belgium was a constant source of uneasiness.

The *émigrés* wished to return to their old privileges on the wave of a counter-revolution. The majority of them were willing to concede very little, and utterly failed to realise that the upheaval in France was something more than a passing phase. They were far more anxious for the restoration of the *ancien régime* than for the stability of the throne, the source of the prerogatives they enjoyed, and their policy consisted of continually belittling Louis to one and all with whom they came in contact. It is true that Marie Antoinette had relied upon the assistance of her brother Joseph II in extricating the royal family from their plight, but neither the Queen nor the Emperor was disposed to allow the Comte d'Artois to interfere. Immediately after the fall of the Bastille Marie Antoinette had urged upon the King the necessity of putting as many miles between him and Paris as was possible—Metz, soldiers, and civil war were her antidotes. A few months later, in October 1789, Artois wrote to Joseph on the need for helping the King,

AN ALLEGORY OF 1791 ON THE GERMAN HOSPITALITY TO THE EMIGRÉS

(Engraved and published at Mannheim by Verhelst, engraver to the Elector Palatine. From a print in the Hennin Collection, given by special permission of the French Government)

and received a well-deserved snub. Louis had made no complaint, "what right then has a third person to interfere between a united King and a nation legally represented by its deputies?" Joseph died early in 1790, and when his brother and successor Leopold was told that the King had succeeded in reaching Bouillé's army, he at once offered armed support. On being informed that the royal fugitives had been stopped at Varennes and forced to return to Paris, his brave resolution ebbed away. Marie Antoinette cordially detested the Comte de Provence, and when he assumed the title of Regent, which in itself was a gross insult, she was aroused to a high pitch of indignation. "If," she remarked, "the *émigrés* should, against all expectation, succeed, we should fall into a new slavery worse than the other. Nothing with them nor for them. The Emperor must insist on this; it is the only way in which he can do us—and especially me—a service. The cowards! After having abandoned us, they desire that we alone should run risks to serve their interest." Perhaps this was why she conceived the idea of intimidation, as opposed to actual hostilities, by means of a Congress of Nations and a military pageant.

A motley array of nobles and clergy on the frontier would not have unduly disconcerted France if their ranks had remained stationary. They were constantly gaining strength, and the suspicion that the King had relations with Artois, Provence, and Condé, as well as with various Powers, was never absent for a moment. Condé, says Gower in February 1791, "declares his resolution of entering France with an armed force whenever an opportunity shall offer;" and Gower was not the only person who knew what was going on. To a certain extent the Assembly had played into the hands of the *émigrés* by depriving the German nobles of Alsace of the privileges

granted to them by the Treaty of Westphalia. On the "Night of Sacrifices," 1789, they had been shorn of their feudal rights, and the loss was confirmed by the decree of the 15th March 1790, by which time the province had become the departments of Haut and Bas-Rhin. The Emperor took up the matter and demanded that the dispossessed nobles be compensated, a line of conduct which he pursued when the Pope suffered the loss of Avignon and the Venaissin in September 1791. As the predecessors of the Sovereign Pontiff had enjoyed possession of the territory since 1228 it seemed rather late in the day for France to "resume her rights." The whole affair was a cynical comment on the resolution passed by the Assembly on the 22nd May 1790 renouncing all enterprises for the sake of conquest and the use of military force against the liberty of any nation. It afforded the *émigrés* a golden opportunity to point out the obvious moral that with France in its present state no neighbouring country was safe, particularly as the union with France was celebrated by a hideous massacre.

At length the Emperor bestirred himself. A suggestion had been made by Mercy, his Ambassador at Paris, that the fortresses near the frontier might be garrisoned by Austrian troops. After some consideration this was regarded as far too risky a plan, and likely to arouse international jealousy. Leopold II preferred the less practical and less troublesome measure of moral pressure. He wrote to all the principal Powers with the exception of Sweden, whose King was discussing affairs with the *émigrés*, suggesting a conference. The result was a meeting of the Emperor and the King of Prussia at Pilnitz, near Dresden, at which Artois, the Elector of Saxony, Bouillé, the Archduke Francis, and Calonne were present. A declaration was then drawn up and sent to

England, Russia, Spain, the two Sicilies, and Sardinia, requesting their co-operation.

The manifesto runs as follows:

"His Majesty the Emperor, and his Majesty the King of Prussia, having given attention to the wishes and representations of Monsieur and of M. le Comte d'Artois, jointly declare that they regard the present situation of his Majesty the King of France as a matter of common interest to all the sovereigns of Europe. They trust that this interest will not fail to be recognised by the Powers, whose aid is solicited, and that in consequence they will not refuse to employ, in conjunction with their said Majesties, the most efficient means in proportion to their resources to place the King of France in a position to establish, with the most absolute freedom, the foundations of a monarchical form of government which shall at once be in harmony with the rights of sovereigns and promote the welfare of the French nation. In that case their said Majesties the Emperor and the King of Prussia are resolved to act promptly and in common accord with the forces necessary to obtain the desired common end.

"In the meantime they will give such orders to their troops as are necessary in order that these may be in a position to be called into active service.

"LEOPOLD. FREDERICK WILLIAM.

"PILNITZ, *August* 27, 1791."

Such an appeal naturally elated the *émigrés*, but in the *Bland-Burges Papers* there is an abstract from a document copied by Mr. Burges, who was England's Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, which puts a far less rosy complexion on the aspect of affairs, and shows that Austria and Prussia were already intent on plunder.

"The Emperor and King of Prussia," it runs, "engage

to co-operate in the re-establishment of the monarchy of France, under limitations similar to those proposed by the Constitutional Articles of the first National Assembly.

"The other Great Powers to be invited to become parties to this treaty.

"By way of indemnification, Alsatia and part of Lorraine to be ceded to the Elector Palatine in exchange for the Duchies of Juliers (Jülich) and Berg, and what is called Lower Bavaria.

"Prussia to have Juliers and Berg, and part of Brabant.

"Austria to have Lower Bavaria, the remaining part of Lorraine, and French Flanders."

The effect of the declaration on the *émigrés* is made clear in the following communication from Lord Malmesbury to the Duke of Portland. It was not until February 1792 that the Emperor and the King of Prussia, for the moment forgetting the long-standing grievances that had existed between their respective countries, concluded a definite alliance.

"Coblenz, *October* 20, 1791.

"My dear Lord,—I promised you in my last, to give you some account of what the swarm of French, now living here, are about, and what is likely, from my observation, to be the result of their operations. It is no very easy matter to make this clearly out, or to follow, with any degree of perspicuity, a plan conducted by people under the influence of almost every passion which can agitate the human mind.

"The most steady and reasonable amongst them appear to be the two Princes. Monsieur eminently deserves this character, and the Count d'Artois is very much reclaimed from that dissipated and flighty reputation he once deserved. The two Princes are supposed to

THE COUNTER REVOLUTION

A satire which sold largely in Paris in 1791. No. 1 is "his Highness Le Petit Condé"; 4, Calonne carrying the treasure of the army; 5, Cardinal "Necklace" [*i.e.* Rohan]; 7, Mlle. de la Motte; 8, Lieut.-General Mirabeau-Tonneau [brother of Gabriel, a leader of the *émigrés*, called "barrel" for his drinking capacities]. The remainder represent *émigrés*, nobility, and clergy. The whole army remains impotent on the wrong side of the Rhine. The original is in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

be at the head of the *noblesse*, and they are assisted by a Council composed of Mons. de Calonne, the Marshals Broglie and Castries, Jaucourt, Haseland, and Vaudreuil, Lieutenant-Generals the Prince of Nassau and the Prince Xavier of Saxe, commonly called Le Comte de Lusace.

"Calonne is the active and leading man, and all their schemes are strongly marked with the impression of his own imagination and sanguine character. Their object goes to interest all the different Sovereigns of Europe in their cause, to obtain according to the position or faculty of each Court, pecuniary or military assistance, and to enter France at the head of an army, preceded by a new project of constitution in the form of a manifesto.

"They here consider the friendly assurances coming from almost all the different Powers of Europe, as so many sure means of recovering their ground in France; but they seem to have forgot, that, as yet, they have obtained nothing but professions; that each of these Courts is actuated by different interests; that they are jealous of each other; that there is no coalition between them, and no union of measures; no convention how the assistance of each is to be given, or in what proportion; and that to bring about such a concert, so as to make it useful, requires time, and, I fear, abilities much greater than belong to anyone here. . . ."

In the Legislative Assembly Isnard told the deputies that the audacity of the dispossessed clergy and the *émigrés* had "risen in proportion to your forbearance. They will never cease to injure till they lose the power of doing so." Emigration was an offence that threatened the horrors of foreign war, said Brissot. How was it possible, he asked, to control internal factions when the *émigrés* were allowed to escape with impunity? Con-

dorcet, replying on behalf of the Constitutionalists, counselled the Assembly to pursue a policy of *laisser faire*, to treat with contempt "those assemblages of discontented spirits on the frontier," as the Constituent Assembly had done. Those whom he addressed, however, were in no mood for conciliatory measures, for no notice had been taken of the amnesty granted when the King had accepted the constitution. Monsieur was commanded to return to France or suffer the loss of his eventual right to the regency should Louis die before the Dauphin had reached his majority, and it was decreed that the property of all *émigrés* who remained in foreign territory after the 1st January 1792 would be confiscated, and the absentees render themselves liable to punishment by death. Even harsher measures were used against the remaining non-juring clergy, who were commanded to take the oath to the constitution within a week or suffer the loss of their salaries and be regarded as suspects. For the most part they absolutely refused to act against their convictions and in direct opposition to the Pope. In May 1792 those who still held out were ordered to be deported. No more foolish decrees were ever issued, for they involved far more than the hostility of a class which had done much to foster the Revolution in its milder stages. Many of the flocks followed their spiritual shepherds, and lost all confidence in an age of enlightenment that required a severance from the faith of their fathers. The clergy, on their part, used all their influence to stir up a fanatical "holy war" against the constitutional priests, whom the bishops declared were unable to administer the sacraments to the good of those who partook of them. In a word, they were apostates. The Church militant sowed seed that ripened to a tragic harvest.

THE LAST CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESSION OF THE REFRACTORY PRIESTS ("LONG NOSES")

A satire on the "interment of the civic oath," August 31, 1792.

(*An aquatint in the Bibliothèque Nationale*)

The *émigrés* had not been slow to show themselves the champions of the non-juring priests when the civil constitution of the clergy had been decreed, and their pretensions were now received far more kindly than they had been hitherto regarded. Although the King sanctioned the demand for the return of Monsieur, he made use of his royal veto and positively refused to sanction those against his brother's confederates and the clergy. In this way he played into the hands of the Girondists and the Jacobins, who were pleased to regard the monarch's action as further evidence of the rift between him and the nation. A further blow was aimed at the throne when Lafayette, now retired from the command of the National Guard, endeavoured to become Mayor of Paris in succession to Bailly, whose term of office had expired. Lafayette had the support of the Constitutionalists, but had lost a great deal of his former popularity by reason of the affair of the Champ de Mars. The plaudits of the people were now enjoyed by the democratic Pétion, the stern denouncer of the military banquet at Versailles, one of the three commissioners who had been charged with the welfare of Louis on his return from Varennes, and an ardent supporter of the Girondists. He was elected by an overwhelming majority, the votes in his favour being more than double those recorded for the former hero of Paris.

Towards the end of 1791 changes were made in the Ministers, whom the Girondists and Jacobins had treated with studied disrespect as representatives of the monarchy. The Comte de Montmorin was succeeded in the Foreign Office by the incompetent and unpopular Valdec de Lessart, hitherto Minister of the Interior; Louis Duportail, Minister of War, resigned and gave place to the Comte de Narbonne, an ambitious royalist with a fixed belief

in the arbitrament of the sword, and whose first appearance in the Assembly as a Minister was made on the 14th December, to announce the King's willingness to place an army of 150,000 ready for active service; Cahier de Gerville became Minister of the Interior; Bertrand de Moleville Minister for the Navy and Colonies; Louis Tarbé retained his office of Minister of the Finances, and that of Justice still remained in the hands of Duport du Tertre. By far the greater number of these men hoped that there might be no resort to arms, but the most persuasive personality was Narbonne, who speedily allied himself with the Girondists. They were anxious for war, not only because they resented the interference of the Emperor and the King of Prussia, as revealed in the Declaration of Pilnitz, but because they believed it would have the effect of hastening the coming of the republic and the spreading of revolutionary opinions throughout Europe. The Electors of Trèves and Mayence and the Bishop of Spires also incurred their indignation by aiding and abetting the machinations of the *émigrés* in allowing them to remain on their territory. "Let us tell the King," cried Isnard from the tribune of the Assembly, "that it is his interest to defend the constitution; that he only reigns by the people and for the people; that the nation is his sovereign, and that he is subject to the law. Let us tell Europe that if the French people once draw the sword they will throw away the scabbard, and will not take it up again till it may be crowned with the laurels of victory; that if cabinets engage kings in a war against the people, we will engage the people in a mortal warfare against kings. . . . The nations will embrace in the presence of dethroned tyrants—of the earth consoled, of Heaven satisfied." It was an inflammatory speech, and it fired the enthusiasm of the deputies, who sent a

deputation to Louis requesting him to communicate with the offenders. If the German princes continued to favour the preparations of the *émigrés*, "the French will carry into their territories not only fire and sword, but liberty." The King promised to write to Leopold, who in his reply politely informed him that he should protect the princes of the Empire. The Elector of Trèves, however, who had offered hospitality to the King's brothers, complied with the demands of Louis.

Early in December 1791 the unfortunate monarch, on his own behalf but at the suggestion of Marie Antoinette, addressed himself to the Emperor, the Empress of Russia, and the Kings of Prussia, Spain, and Sweden, suggesting "a congress of the chief Powers of Europe, supported by an armed force, as the best means of checking seditious parties, of establishing a more desirable order of things, and of preventing the evil which afflicts us from reaching the other States of Europe." The words are those of Louis to Frederick William of Prussia, upon whom "the most absolute secrecy" was enjoined.

The feverish desire for war shown by the Girondists speedily passed to all sections of the community, with the exception of some of the more prominent Jacobins, who were of opinion that if it had to come, the enemy should be the aggressor. Danton, Marat, Robespierre, Dubois-Crancé, and half a dozen big men at the Club opposed the war, which most of them fully recognised was now almost inevitable. Nevertheless their party did much to aid the martial spirit now rampant. "The Jacobins," writes Gower on the 10th February 1792, "are acquiring popularity in a degree and manner that are truly alarming. The inhabitants of the Faubourg St. Antoine have already made for themselves about thirty thousand pikes; the manufacture of which continues, and seems to be en-

couraged by the municipality, although they are more calculated for pillage than for the protection of the property of citizens. The royal family become every day more unpopular."

A month later his report shows that France was again lapsing into a state bordering on madness. "The general anarchy," he writes, "which has been for some time increasing in this country, seems at present to be nearly arrived at its greatest height. From the northern departments accounts are daily received of riots and disturbances, the pretence for which is the monopoly of corn; the price of it, however, is, in that part of the kingdom, far from dear; the real cause is a total dissolution of government. In the markets, even in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, the farmers are obliged to sell their corn at a price fixed by armed peasants in large bodies. In the department of the Eure there is a body of them consisting of not less than six thousand. At Estampes the mayor has been massacred. In order to quell the disturbances in that town six hundred National Guards with cannon have been sent from hence (Paris), and another party of two hundred have also been sent with cannon into the neighbourhood of Versailles. But the proceedings in the south are still more violent and alarming: it is a singular event that a mixed body of two thousand people should arrive from Marseilles at the gates of Aix so unexpectedly that the inhabitants should not be able to make any defence against them. The fact is that the National Guard of that town was unwilling to oppose them, and the commanding officer having, through pusillanimity, ordered the soldiers of the Swiss Regiment d'Ernest to surrender their arms to the *brigands*, that regiment has given a painful proof of its good discipline."

It was on the 25th January 1792, that Brissot at

Ah ! Juste Ciel ! dans quel embarras me suis je mis
J'aimerois mieux voir le Diable dans mes etats
Que d'i voir les Patriotes Francais

THE ELECTOR OF TRÈVES LEARNS THAT HE MUST NOT PROTECT THE EMIGRÉS

His rage and despair at the threat of war.

(From a satirical print in the Hennin Collection, given by special permission of the French Government)

length secured the adoption of a motion on which he based all his hopes. The Elector of Trèves had been informed by Leopold that if the French entered his domains the Empire would come to his aid. The fact that the King's brother-in-law had said anything at all about soldiers was regarded as a threat by the French war party; and he was accused of having broken the terms of the treaty of 1756 between France and Austria. Louis, as a result of Brissot's fiery eloquence, was requested to ask the Emperor if he intended to respect the sovereignty and independence of the French nation. If no satisfactory answer were given before the 1st of the following March, war would be declared. The immediate result was the formation of a defensive alliance between Prussia and Austria on the 7th February, as already noted on a previous page.[1]

Jean Pierre Brissot was the son of an innkeeper of Chartres who had entered the office of a Paris attorney early in life and forsaken its monotony for the more adventurous career of a journalist. For a supposed libel on the Queen he had made the acquaintance of the Bastille. After a period of work in Switzerland he crossed to England, and on his reappearance in France became acquainted with Mirabeau. Some time later he crossed the Atlantic in connection with the work of the *Société des Amis des Noirs*. When he again set foot in France the Revolution had already begun. Seizing his opportunity, he at once turned his literary ability to use by writing numerous pamphlets and founding *Le Patriote Français*. The fame thus acquired secured for him a place in the municipality of Paris.

The following shows what Madame Roland thought of Brissot:

[1] See *ante*, p. 350.

"The simplicity of his manners, his frankness, his natural negligence, seemed to me in perfect harmony with the austerity of his principles; but I found in him a kind of lightness both of mind and character not altogether becoming the gravity of a philosopher; this always pained me, and his enemies made the most of it. For all that, the more I saw of him, the more I esteemed him. It would be impossible to find a more entire disinterestedness united to a more whole-hearted zeal for the public welfare, or to give oneself to well-doing with a greater forgetfulness of self. His writings have all the authority of reason, justice, and enlightenment, though as a man Brissot is entirely lacking in dignity. He is the best of men, a good husband, a tender father, a faithful friend, a virtuous citizen; his society is as agreeable as his character is obliging; confiding to the verge of imprudence, gay, naïve, disingenuous as a boy of fifteen, he was made to live with the wise, and to be the dupe of the wicked. A learned publicist, devoted from his youth to the study of social questions, and of the means of furthering the happiness of the human race, he understands man perfectly, but knows nothing of men. He recognises that vices exist, but cannot believe him vicious who speaks to him with a fair tongue; and when at length he recognises any one as such, he pities him, treats him as one would do an insane person, but without distrusting him. He cannot hate; we might say that his soul, sensitive as it is, has not sufficient solidity to entertain such a vigorous sentiment. With wide knowledge, he has an extreme facility of work, and composes a treatise as another would copy a song."

By a strange coincidence, both the time-limit for the Emperor's reply and the monarch himself expired on the 1st March. It was while Leopold was lying on his death-bed that the Assembly read his answer. There can be no

question that it was inspired by Marie Antoinette, but it was soon noised abroad that it was the work of Barnave and Duport. It had been sent to the Count de Mercy-Argenteau, the Austrian Ambassador, who was then at Brussels, and forwarded by him to Kaunitz. It contained matter deeply offensive to the Jacobins. They were stigmatised as "a pernicious set" and the cause of the Emperor's preparations. A week later, and a day after Narbonne had been dismissed, Brissot and Vergniaud attacked De Lessart, the Foreign Minister, who had swallowed what many of the deputies called Leopold's insults because he had sought to bring about a peaceful settlement. Thirteen articles of accusation were levelled at his head, and he was charged with treason and brought for trial before the High Tribunal of the State at Orleans. The resignation of the remaining ministers followed. They had held office for almost a minimum time, but had managed to put in the maximum amount of quarrelling amongst themselves, and entirely forfeited what little confidence the Assembly was disposed to place in the executive.

Mignet, careful in the extreme in most matters, attempts to justify the King's choice of a Girondist Ministry by saying that he "had no resource but to select his new ministers from amongst the victorious party," and suggests that "an alliance with the actual rulers of the revolution could alone save liberty and the throne by restoring harmony between the Assembly, the supreme authority, and the municipality." Professor H. Morse Stephens points out that the matter "has never satisfactorily been explained," and he hazards the opinion that Mirabeau's plan of forming a ministry "among the opponents of the King in order to teach them sobriety by giving them responsibility, may have been the motive." On one or two occasions only had Louis seen fit to resist the popular

will, and it may have been that he did not consider it politic to oppose the national cry for war, a demand seconded by many of the Constitutionalists because they thought it would strengthen the monarchy. Doubtless Francis II, the new ruler at Vienna and a young man, would support his aunt's cause, although possibly with less sentimental interest—and that was limited enough—than had obtained with his father. Obviously his words would carry less weight in the Courts of Europe.

The two most able men in a Cabinet not conspicuous for ability, and termed by the royalists *le Sansculotte*, were Dumouriez, Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Roland, Minister of the Interior, whose chief claim to fame is as his wife's husband. Clavière, Lacoste, and Duranton were appointed to Finance, Navy, and Justice respectively. De Grave remained as Minister of War. With much self-satisfaction Duranton boasted to the Assembly that he had spent twenty years in studying the works of Rousseau and other political writers.

The character of Dumouriez is not easy to diagnose. He has been vilified by most of his biographers as a traitor; a few others[1] have attempted to show that there were "extenuating circumstances" when he went over to the Austrians after his defeat at Neerwinden. Born in 1738, his earliest ambition was associated with the rosary, and he determined to become a Jesuit missionary. This phase did not live to take deep root. He turned to the sword, fought in the Seven Years' War and in Corsica, became a diplomatist and author, wore the Cross of St. Louis on his breast, was stigmatised as an "adventurer" by Choiseul, sent as an emissary to Poland by D'Aiguillon, spent a short time in the Bastille, and eventually became

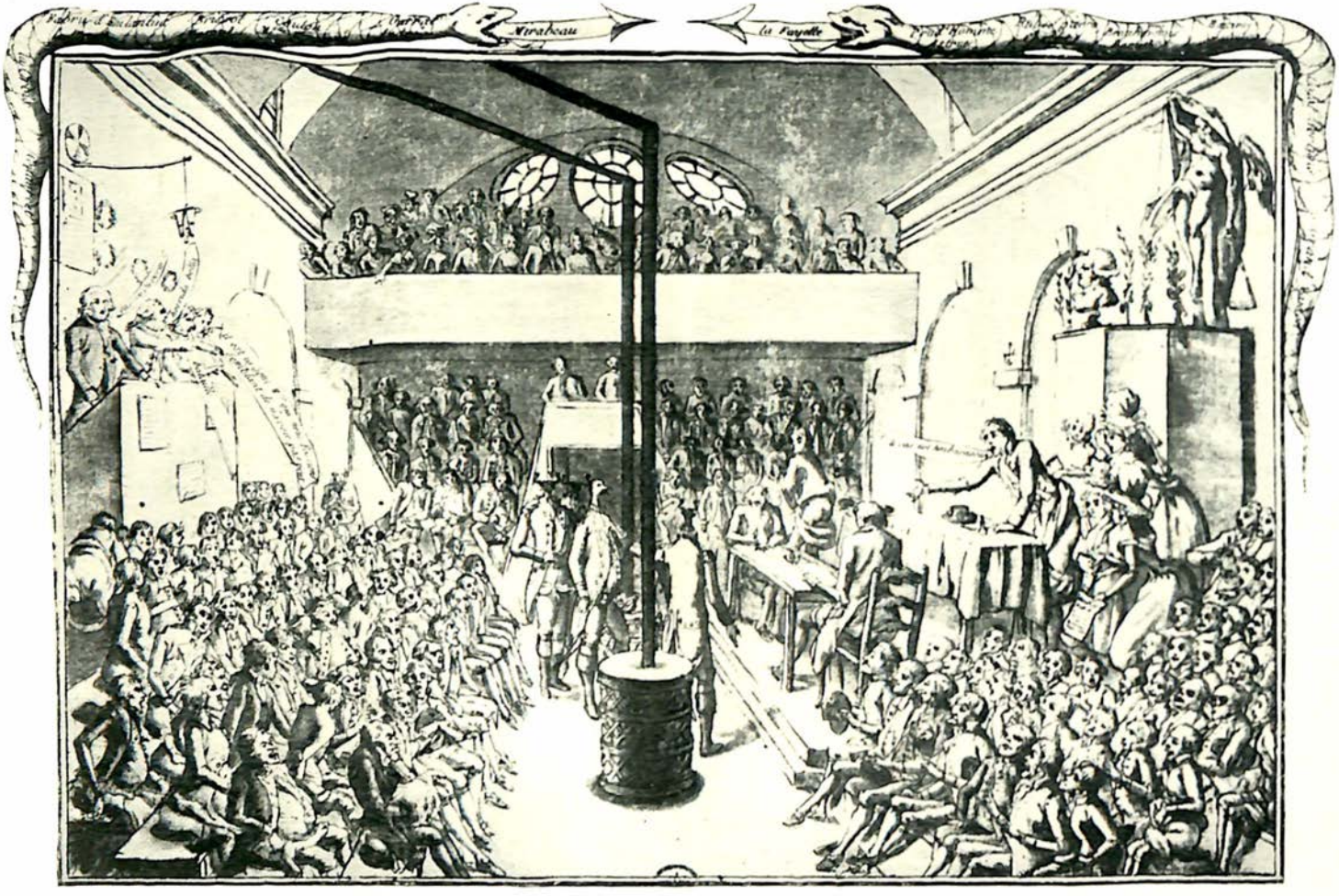
[1] Notably Dr. J. Holland Rose and Mr. A. M. Broadley in *Dumouriez and the Defence of England against Napoleon* (London, 1909).

commandant of Cherbourg. Here, on the breaking out of the Revolution, he repelled mutiny and riot with a firm hand. Dumouriez fully appreciated the aspirations of the people to cast aside their fetters, but he based his hopes for them on a constitution and a limited monarchy, not on anarchy. He pursued a similar policy when he became commander of the five departments near the mouth of the Loire, thereby attracting the favourable attention of Narbonne, who summoned him to Paris in February 1792 after having made him a lieutenant-general. He got into touch with Gensonné and his Girondist friends, and also with De Lessart. It was in vain that he counselled the Minister of Foreign Affairs to make a bold stand against Leopold's pretended right to dictate to France. On the 15th March 1792 he himself succeeded to the Foreign Office. His appearance, says a contemporary, was "common-place, almost ugly, though his features were agreeable; his eyes small, but lively and daring; his mouth large, but with an expression of sweetness and gaiety, or at times of shrewdness and disdain; his voice clear and firm; his manners brusque and lively, but without rudeness—reserved, and with nothing of passion in them." Madame Roland, who had a wonderful faculty for seizing on the salient points of those with whom she associated, deals with the inner qualities of the man, and not with his exterior. Dumouriez, she says, had "more intellect and less morality" than his colleagues. "Diligent and brave, a good general, a clever courtier, a good writer and ready speaker, capable of great enterprises, he only lacked something of strength of character for his intellect, and a fund of coolness for carrying out his plans. Pleasing with his friends, and ready to receive them all, he was made for the intrigues of a corrupt court"—such is the opinion of the female

"chief" of the Girondists. "His brilliant qualities," she continues, "and his interest to win glory, caused the belief that he would be useful in the republican armies; and perhaps he would have kept straight if the Convention had been wise; for he is too prudent not to act well when his reputation and his interest lead him that way."

In his despatch of the 23rd March Gower notes that "Mr. du Mouriez" spent many hours with "Mr. de la Fayette" during the previous week before the latter left for the frontier, and had attended a meeting of the Jacobin Club, made a patriotic speech which was much applauded by the members, "and worked so strongly upon Mr. Robespierre's feelings that he could not resist embracing the minister. The Jacobins that evening, but not till after Mr. du Mouriez had worn one, put a stop to the newly-adopted folly of wearing red caps, which had already been attended with some disagreeable circumstances to individuals; a letter from Mr. Péthion (Pétion) corresponding with the sentiments of Mr. Robespierre upon that subject, the Society agreed that the national cockade was a sufficient token of the love of liberty." The *Couvent des Jacobins*, the same correspondent informs us, "may now undoubtedly be called the Ministerial Club." In the matter of the scarlet headgear so inseparably associated with the Revolution, it may be of interest to note that when Lafayette was staying at Chavaniac in the previous October the arms of the Marquis on the door had been replaced by a huge painted representation of the cap of liberty.

The frequent exchange of notes between the Court of Vienna and the French Government failed to settle the differences between them. Finally the Council of Ministers requested Louis to propose to the Assembly a



A Grand Séance at the Jacobins on the Declaration of War in 1792

A caricature of 1792 in the Bibliothèque Nationale. The War Minister (Dumouriez) is represented with a pigeon's head.

declaration of war against the King of Hungary and Bohemia. On the 20th April 1792 the King went in procession to the Manège for that purpose. "From the windows of the Hôtel de Jonzac, which overlooked the Rue Saint Honoré, we saw him pass," writes that ardent royalist Frénilly. "His train of attendants had become exceedingly modest. It seems to me that his coach had only six horses, and that instead of being accompanied by the captain of the Guards and the first gentleman on duty, he alone occupied it. There was none of his old body-guards, who had long since been discharged; no Cent Suisses, who had suffered the same fate; no French Guards, for they had all been incorporated in other regiments; and no Swiss Guards,[1] whom they dared neither disband nor show. All that remained was the Constitutional Guard, composed of excellent and wholly devoted men, who, for the most part, had entered the service out of a sense of duty, but whom the Assembly, a few days later, discharged." At the sitting Madame de Staël was present. "On entering the Assembly," she says, "he looked to the right and the left with that kind of vacant curiosity which is usual to persons who are so short-sighted that their eyes seem to be of no use to them. He proposed war in the same tone of voice as he might have used in requiring the most indifferent decree possible. The President replied to him with the laconic arrogance adopted in this Assembly, as if the dignity of a free people consisted in insulting the King whom it had chosen for its constitutional chief. When Louis XVI and his ministers had left the hall, the Assembly voted war by acclamation. Some members took no share in

[1] Basire first mooted the abolition of the Constitutional Guard on the 29th May. It was made up of men elected from every district of France, and included Murat, the future King of Naples.

the deliberations: the deputies threw their hats in the air, and that day, the first of the sanguinary struggle which has distracted Europe during twenty-three years, that day did not, in most minds, produce the slightest disquietude. Yet of the deputies who voted for this war, many fell by a violent death, and those who rejoiced at it the most were unconsciously pronouncing their own doom."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE BEGINNING OF THE GREAT WAR

"I call God to witness that I desire only the happiness of France."
LOUIS XVI.

THERE was scarcely a statesman in Europe who thought that the hostilities thus lightly entered upon by the French were likely to prove other than disastrous to the aggressors. Diplomatists surmised a speedy collapse. The internal dissensions of the country, the *émigrés* without the gates, the constantly-changing executive at Paris, and the weak and uncertain condition of the military and naval services, were handicaps that would militate against success. France believed that, given no British interference, she would not only thrash the allies, but the remainder of Europe as well. "This notion," said England's ambassador, "is encouraged by a persuasion that the influence of the Jacobins and an inoculation of their principles will occasion an insurrection, which, according to their language, is *le plus saint des devoirs*, in every country whose Government shall dare to oppose them in arms."

A great deal depended upon the attitude of Great Britain. At the opening of the session of 1792 Pitt declared in a speech that has now become classic on account of its amazing lack of foresight, that "unquestionably there never was a time in the history of this country when, from the situation of Europe, we might more reasonably expect fifteen years of peace than we may at the present moment," and he asked the House to reduce the military and naval forces. Dumouriez was all for an

alliance, for which purpose he sent Talleyrand to London on a special mission; Pitt was equally determined on nothing more than strict neutrality. Nor was England the only country with whom the French Minister for Foreign Affairs coquetted. He paid particular attention to the Netherlands, where of necessity the first blow would be struck against Austria, because they were the weakest and most accessible of her possessions. Maret went armed with specious promises as to a forthcoming "federal republic," for the provinces and the bishopric of Liége had shown that they were not altogether unfavourable to the Revolution, and indeed Dumouriez relied upon the practical sympathy of the Belgians when once the army was moving. Fersen had likewise been busy. At the request of Marie Antoinette, he had forwarded certain information to Vienna which enabled the authorities to be on their guard, but did not prove a great incentive to effort, seeing that 30,000 whitecoats were considered sufficient to protect Belgium from invaders.

According to the plan of campaign, Biron, formerly Duc de Lauzun, was to make Valenciennes his base and march on Mons, supported by the Maréchal de Rochambeau, the commander-in-chief. Lafayette was to advance upon Namur, and from thence upon Brussels or Liége; Dillon was charged with the fall of Tournay. The campaign was ably conceived, but the soldiers who were to carry it out were not submissive to discipline, there was a serious deficit of men in the artillery, the commissariat was bad, officers were scarce, and on the first occasion of Dillon's division being under fire, some of the troops took to their heels. The attack was made when it was least expected, there was suspicion of treachery, and a belief on the part of the men that they had been led into a trap

B.R
Les puissances coalisées faisant danser
aux depens Enragés et aux Sacrepants
le même ballet que le sieur Nicolet faisoit
danser jadis a ses Dindons

THE POWERS THREATEN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WITH THE TERRORS OF WAR

A Royalist caricature in aquatint published early in 1792.

(From a copy in the Bibliotheque Nationale)

intentionally. Dillon was murdered in cold blood in the streets of Lille, to which city his division fled in wild disorder. At first Biron's troops behaved tolerably well, although their good conduct after entering Quiévrain, which was abandoned by a small force of Houlans on their approach, was marred to some extent by signs of an inordinate fondness for strong liquor. He pushed on towards Mons, but finding Beaulieu well posted, he had a slight skirmish and retraced his steps towards Quiévrain. Here he found that the French garrison had been driven out. After some difficulty he succeeded in worsting the Houlans, but reinforcements coming up to the assistance of the enemy, he was forced to abandon it, together with his baggage and military stores, and retreat on Valenciennes. Lafayette had also to stay his advance by reason of the breakdown of the invasion. Rochambeau, disgusted with the whole business, and offended because De Grave had seen fit to communicate direct with Biron, his inferior officer, tendered his resignation to the King. It was accepted, and his command given to Lückner, who at once proceeded to the seat of war. There was little or no co-operation between the Ministry and the generals, corruption was rampant, and after the ill-success of Dillon and Biron many of the officers resigned their commands. Shortly afterwards De Grave, on whose shoulders a great deal of the responsibility for defeat was foisted, vacated the Ministry of War to Servan, a man of considerably more energy, and withal a Republican. Rochambeau blamed Dumouriez, but both he and Lafayette acknowledged that too much reliance had been placed on the goodwill of the Belgians.

Although these initial military disasters nearly overturned the Girondist Ministry, the accession of the self-reliant Servan and the continued enthusiasm for war saved

it. Desertions from the army were plentiful, but so too were accessions to the volunteers, and the free-will gifts and addresses sent to the capital showed that the love of glory was by no means lost to the nation. The Assembly fully appreciated the difficulty of the task it had undertaken. The Constitutional Guard, as already mentioned, was disbanded; the non-juring clergy, liable to stir up strife at home, were condemned to exile; and in order to provide for the safety of Paris in case of invasion, which was believed to be highly probable, it decreed the formation of a camp outside the city of 20,000 men from all the cantons of the kingdom. This, of course, was regarded in the light of an insult to the National Guard, who bitterly resented the treatment meted out to them. It was Servan's notion, and it was carried, despite considerable opposition, through the Assembly.

Louis resolved not to sanction the orders for the banishment of the orthodox priests and the formation of the camp, notwithstanding that those who wished to help him in his dilemma earnestly counselled him that opposition was in vain and was merely playing into the hands of his enemies. This defiant attitude brought matters to a climax with his ministers. Madame Roland took it upon herself to soundly rate him in a letter which pointed out in no uncertain language that if he used his prerogative he would be regarded by his subjects as a "friend and accomplice of conspirators." Such an attempt at petticoat government made him more obstinate than ever, and he forthwith dismissed Roland, Servan, and Clavière without a shadow of regret. Dumouriez was retained and given the portfolio of War, to keep it for five days. He resigned his new post because he was unable, despite his most earnest pleadings and far-sightedness, to persuade the King to accept the decrees which had already brought

about the dismissal of his three colleagues. Louis, still able to nominate his ministers, chose them from among the Feuillants. Lacoste and Duranton alone remained; the War Department was made over to Lajarre, who had served as aide-de-camp to Lafayette; Chambonnas, formerly Mayor of Sens, became Minister of Foreign Affairs; D'Ormesson, once Controller-General, succeeded to the *Département des Contributions;* and Monteil was entrusted with the affairs of the Interior.

With his departure for the front to take a comparatively insignificant command under Lückner, the erstwhile minister put away for a time all thoughts of practical politics. Perhaps Dumouriez did so in order to engender good feeling between himself and his fellow-officers, most of whom were Feuillants, to which party he had belonged before entering the Girondist group. However that may be, it is certain that he had endeavoured to steer a course which he hoped would keep the executive in some kind of harmony with the Assembly, and one of his last public acts as a statesman was to urge the deputies to have more confidence in the ministers. Like Mirabeau, he attempted to be "all things to all men," and while he was not averse to wearing the red Phrygian cap at the Jacobin Club, he remained as faithful to the Girondists as was possible in a party which, despite its high moral ambitions, was not proof against the common sin of jealousy. He succeeded in gaining the confidence of Louis, who, had he taken the advice of Dumouriez, would have placed himself at the head of the Revolution.

The King's exercise of his prerogative had several immediate effects. His unpopularity with the masses increased, rumours of an "Austrian Committee"[1] sitting

[1] Consisting of, among others, Bertrand de Moleville, Montmorin, Mercy, and La Marck. Their aim was to secure Austrian intervention on behalf of Louis.

in Paris with the object of assisting the enemy were persistently prevalent. Marie Antoinette was openly referred to as Madame Veto, and as a traitor who was betraying plans to Austria; and the sections which executed the orders of the municipality grew more revolutionary, and frequently disputed the superior authority. The removal of the "patriot ministers" and a letter from Lafayette at Maubeuge read before the Assembly on the 18th June put the match to the powder. In his communication the hero of the American War openly accused the "Jacobin faction" of having caused all the disorders. "The reign of clubs" should be ended and give place to the "reign of law; their usurpations to the firm and independent exercise of the constituted authorities . . .; their wild fury to the calm and persevering courage of a nation that knows its rights and defends them." In addition he appealed for an increase in the army, to enable the country to resist "the conspiracy of kings." It was Lafayette's hope that he might restore power to Louis and also further his own ambition.

Preparations had already been made by the leaders of the faubourgs, by Santerre the wealthy brewer, Legendre the butcher, Rossignol the jeweller, and Alexandre, also a dealer in precious stones, to celebrate the anniversary of the Tennis Court Oath on the 20th, and amongst the various items of the programme was the planting of a tree of liberty and the presentation of an address to Louis and to the Assembly, praying for the recall of the dismissed ministers. To carry these plans into effect, it was first of all necessary to obtain permission of the municipality, which under the new order of things now shared the government of Paris with the Directory of the Department. The municipality, or commune, as it was frequently termed, had charge of all arrangements for

securing the peace of the city, and could call out the National Guard and the regular troops for that purpose. The council-general, scenting danger for the King, refused its permission for the demonstration, and Pétion was ordered to take extra precautions to guard the Tuileries and the Salle du Manège. A pretended way out of the difficulty was suggested by one of the commandants whom the mayor took into his confidence. If he and the National Guards of the Faubourgs Saint Antoine and Saint Marceau accompanied the petitioners, surely no objection could be raised? To this Pétion assented, and sent word to Roederer, the recently-appointed Procureur-general-syndic of the Directory. For a second time the arrangements were cancelled, but the mayor took no further steps beyond sending instructions to the officers that the National Guard was not to accompany the people. Roederer was despatched post-haste to the Assembly. While the matter was being discussed, the petitioners made their appearance. Very soon the crush became so great that the King gave his permission for the garden of the Tuileries to be opened. Still the deputies continued their deliberations. "It would be wronging the citizens who now request to pay their homage to you to suppose that they have evil designs," said Vergniaud. Eventually it was decided that the motley mob should be allowed to march through the Assembly. All sorts and conditions of men and women were represented, sober, drunk, well-dressed, ragged, armed, unarmed, peaceful, quarrelsome. Muskets and swords, agricultural implements roped on poles, pikes and sabres, cutlasses and axes, knives and bludgeons, were in the collection of weapons of this burlesque army.

A pair of breeches bearing the motto, "*Vivent les Sans-culottes!*" was the standard of one section. A calf's

heart inscribed as "The heart of an aristocrat" was borne aloft on a pike, and represented the playful humour of the faubourgs. These people were come, said their petition, to assure the Assembly that they were alert and ready to avenge the majesty of the outraged nation. "Seek out the cause of the evils which menace us; if they arise from the executive power, let it be annihilated." Such was its portent. On the whole, the mob was orderly and in good humour, and after the people had finished their business with the Assembly they trooped out.

It would not be difficult to write a lengthy chapter on the many vexed questions that have been raised regarding the events that followed immediately after the petitioners had vacated the old riding-school. The important fact is that the gates of the palace were opened, and the search began for the King. They discovered him after considerable trouble to themselves and damage to door-panelling in the Œil de Bœuf, and some of them at once began speechifying. There were cries of "To the devil with Monsieur Veto," "Recall the patriot ministers," "Traitor," and similar epithets. The King sat in the recess of one of the windows and showed that extraordinary courage in the face of danger which affords such a violent contrast to his lamentable indecision in the practical affairs of everyday life. Someone asked him to don a red cap with tricolour ribands; another suggested that he should drink to the health of the nation in a glass previously used by a soldier. He complied with both requests. In the Council Chamber Marie Antoinette, the Dauphin, and Madame Royale stood behind the table and had to listen to the scoffs and jeers of those who hated "the Austrian." Like his father, the child was compelled to wear the red cap of liberty. Madame Elizabeth, who had been with Louis and got separated from him in the crush,

Photo Giraudon

THE FATEFUL 20TH OF JUNE—THE PEOPLE ENTER THE TUILERIES

(*From the original drawing by Prieur* (*the design for the well-known engraving*) *now in the Louvre*)

behaved with the greatest sang-froid, even when a pike was placed within an inch of her bare throat. "You do not want to hurt me," she remarked to the insolent fellow at the other end. "Put away your weapon!" It was not until the mayor arrived that the crowd consented to disperse. Pétion's folly was mildly rebuked by the King; the Directory of the Department of the Seine dealt out sterner justice. Both Pétion and the procureur of the municipality were suspended. It was the latter who said when he heard that Louis had donned the Phrygian cap, "It must have a droll effect, that red bonnet which we have mounted on the head of the King." . . .

LOUIS WEARS THE RED BONNET

After a satirical print published on the morrow of June 20, 1792. In the Bibliothèque Nationale.

Sitting in a restaurant in the Rue St. Honoré was a small, dark-complexioned man of twenty-three. He saw the mob approaching in the direction of the market-place, and estimated them at from five to six thousand men, which fact testified to his alertness of mind in mathematical matters. In his quick, abrupt way he turned to his companion and said, "Let us follow the rabble." The two took up a position of vantage on the terrace bordering the river. "It was there," his friend tells us, "that he was an eye-witness of the scandalous scenes that ensued; and it would be difficult to describe the surprise and indignation which they excited in him. Such weak-

ness and forbearance, he said, could not be excused; but when the King showed himself at a window which looked out upon the garden, with the red cap which one of the mob had just placed upon his head, he could no longer repress his indignation. 'What madness!' he loudly exclaimed; 'how could they allow that rabble to enter? Why do they not sweep away four or five hundred of them with cannon? The remainder would take themselves off very quickly!' When we sat down to dinner, he discussed with great good sense the causes and consequences of this unrepressed insurrection. He foresaw, and developed with sagacity, all that would follow; and in this he was not mistaken."

The young man who predicted the 10th August was destined to take the place of the fat, good-natured, easy-going monarch who was at that moment discussing the outlook with a deputation from the Assembly. It was Napoleon. . . .

While Gower is doubtless correct in saying that the attempt to intimidate Louis "failed entirely," and "served only to impress more strongly on the minds of those who wish for order and good government an abhorrence of their (the Jacobins') principles and practices," the reaction in favour of the Constitutionalists was not lasting. Lafayette followed up his letter by appearing at the bar of the Assembly, believing that his personal intervention would save the situation. It only made it worse. The clubs referred to him as "traitor," "dictator," and "Cromwell," and what was said behind walls was echoed in the streets.

The house was packed with deputies and spectators when Lafayette was given a hearing. He began his speech by assuring his listeners that his presence in Paris in no way jeopardised the troops he had the honour to

command, for whose welfare he had made arrangements with Lückner. They had already presented to him many addresses on the subject of the outrages committed at the Tuileries, and required satisfaction as to whether it was the cause of liberty and the constitution that they were defending. "I entreat the Assembly," he went on, "to order the authors and instigators of the 20th of June to be prosecuted as men guilty of high treason; to destroy a party whose public debates leave no doubt of their evil intentions. I entreat the Assembly also, in my own name and in the name of all honourable men, to take proper measures to make the constituted authorities respected, and to assure the armies that the constitution shall be respected within while they are shedding their blood in defence of it against enemies from without." The general received the applause of the Right and the execrations of the Left. Guadet declaimed on Lafayette's own insubordination in leaving the army on his own responsibility, and proposed that the matter should be inquired into, but on the motion being put to the vote, there was a majority of 105 against it. At the Tuileries the King gave Lafayette no encouragement, and the National Guards failed to show that the trust they had once placed in him was maintained. Within a few hours he returned to the front, a saddened and a defeated man, deserving of the epithet of *Gilles le Grand* once bestowed on him by Choiseul.

On the 3rd July Vergniaud, the most eloquent speaker of the Gironde, and perhaps of all who ascended the tribune of the Assembly, opened his oratorical guns on the unfortunate monarch in the Tuileries. His speech was a covert attempt to broach the deposition of Louis. The armies of the north, he said, by their withdrawal from the Netherlands, had made France the theatre of war, and the

unfortunate Belgians "had nothing to remember us by but the conflagrations which lit up our retreat." The Prussians were menacing the Rhine. Yet this moment was chosen to dismiss the patriot ministers and to deliver the empire into inexperienced hands. He then referred to the King's veto of the decree against the non-juring priests, which ensured the continuance of religious dissensions, and the refusal of Louis to allow the formation of a reserve force outside Paris. "It is in the name of the King," cried Vergniaud, "that the French princes have endeavoured to raise all the Courts of Europe against France; it is to vindicate the dignity of the King that the Treaty of Pilnitz was concluded, and the monstrous alliance made between the Courts of Vienna and Berlin; it is to defend the King that the former companies of the Body-guard have hurried to Germany to serve beneath the standards of rebellion; it is to come to the help of the King that the *émigrés* ask for and obtain employment in the Austrian armies, and prepare to tear the bosom of their fatherland; it is to join these gallant defenders of the royal prerogative that other gallants of the most scrupulous honour are abandoning their posts in the presence of the enemy, are breaking their oaths, are stealing the military chests, are labouring to corrupt their soldiers, and are thus setting their glory in cowardice, perjury, bribery, theft, and assassination; it is against the nation or the National Assembly alone, and for the maintenance of the splendours of the throne that the King of Hungary and Bohemia is making war upon us, and the King of Prussia marching towards our frontiers; it is in the name of the King that liberty is being attacked, and if it should be overthrown the empire would soon be dismembered to indemnify the allied Powers for their outlay; for the generosity of kings is well known, as well as the disinter-

A Satire on Lafayette's Attempt to Secure the Jacobins

(From a print in the Hennin Collection given by special permission of the French Government)

estedness with which they send their armies to desolate a foreign land, and the extent to which it can be believed that they would exhaust their treasuries to sustain a war which should not be profitable to them. In fine, it is the name of the King alone which is the pretext or the cause of all the evils which are being heaped upon our heads, and of all which we have to dread.

"I read in the constitution," he added, "that 'if the King puts himself at the head of an army, and directs its force against the nation, or if he does not oppose by a formal act such an enterprise executed in his name, he shall be considered as having abdicated the throne.' What is a formal act of opposition? If 100,000 Austrians march towards Flanders, and 100,000 Prussians towards Alsace, and the King opposes them by 10,000 or 20,000 men, has he manifested a formal act of opposition?" The orator continued in this strain for a considerable period, interrupted by rounds of applause when a particularly telling point struck home. He made frequent use of insinuating interrogatives. "Is it for our defence that all plans tending to fortify the interior are crushed? Is it for our defence that a general who violates the constitution remains unchecked, whilst the courage of those who serve it is repressed? Does the constitution give you the choice of ministers for our welfare or our ruin?" and so on. Vergniaud concluded by suggesting that Louis be respectfully asked to choose between France and foreign countries.

Notwithstanding this burst of fiery eloquence, on the suggestion of Dumas the Assembly declared that Lückner still retained the confidence of the nation. That deputy also took the opportunity to point out that the preparations for war had been made by the Girondist Ministry. Three days later a decree was passed requiring the re-

election of the *états majors* of all corps of National Guards in those towns which had a population of 50,000 and upwards. As the majority of the officers then serving were Feuillants, the design is obvious, and the organisation of the Jacobins was fully utilised to ensure the return of those in sympathy with their aims.

On yet another occasion was the way opened for the King's return as the real "Father of his People." Appropriately enough, it was brought about by a prelate, Lamourette, the constitutional Bishop of Lyons. "How is it," he asked during the course of his remarks, "that the two parties of the Assembly mutually reproach each other? The one accuses the other of wishing to modify the constitution by the intervention of strangers, and the latter accuses the former of aiming at the overthrow of the monarchy for the establishment of a republic. Let us put an end to these reproaches; let us hurl the same anathema against a republic and the two chambers; let us devote them both to common execration by a final and irrevocable oath. Let us swear to be unanimous and accordant in our views and sentiments; let us solemnly bind ourselves in the bonds of an eternal brotherhood. Let the enemy know that we are only animated by one will, and France is saved!"

A scene of enthusiasm only to be compared with that of the celebrated "Night of Sacrifices" then took place. Deputies of the Right fraternised with those of the Left, abandoning their conflicting ideals and interests in an ecstasy of emotion.

As of old, a serpent found its way into this fair Eden of legislators. It came in no personal form, but in the announcement that the Department of Paris had determined to suspend both Pétion and Manuel from their respective duties. This decision, in addition to casting a

stigma on the most popular man of the day, virtually condemned those who had taken part in the affair of the 20th June. Within a week the Assembly restored both the mayor and procureur-syndic.

Paris was now agog with the forthcoming annual celebration of the 14th July, and there were some who predicted that heads on pikes would form part of the spectacle, as had those of De Flesselles and Governor De Launay on the day that had witnessed the fall of the Bastille.[1] They based their sanguinary prophecy on the declaration of the Assembly in the second week of that month, and five days after the news had been received of the mobilisation of Prussian troops, that the country was in danger. Volunteers were enrolled in enormous numbers. Those who had already served in the National Guard were again placed on active service, pikes were handed out to those who did not possess weapons, and the remainder were required to report what arms and munitions they had. With a keen sense of the dramatic, and as a constant reminder of the patriotism that was required of them, citizens were ordered to wear the red, white, and blue cockade, the symbol of the Revolution.

Compared to the first anniversary of the 14th July in the Champ de Mars, that of 1792 was quite a tame affair. There were no untoward happenings, to the intense relief of Marie Antoinette, who fully expected the King's assassination. The *fédérés* present were comparatively few in number, and did not exceed 3000, but Gower tells us that special care was taken by the Jacobins to secure accommodation for them where they would be least influenced by the hated Feuillants. Bertrand de Moleville, one of the so-called Austrian Committee, was so pleased with the tranquil nature of the proceedings that he

[1] See pp. 212–13.

thought the monarchy might yet be saved if the plan of the factions could be counteracted "sufficiently to prevent the execution of it till the combined armies had entered France." Of the ceremony itself little need be said. The altar of the country gave place to a broken column; the first stone of a monument to mark the spot where the Bastille had stood was laid, and a "tree of feudality" was erected and set on fire to mark the extinction of aristocracy and all its works. In 1790 the populace had cheered Lafayette as their great hero; that favour was now Pétion's. It was "*Pétion, Vive Pétion!*" from beginning to end. A few of the National Guard alone cheered the King and the pale-faced, overwrought Queen, whose every action betrayed intense anxiety as to whether they would be suffered to return to the Tuileries other than as victims.

On the 28th July it was known in the capital that a proclamation bearing the signature of the Duke of Brunswick, commander of the Prussian army, had been received. That the insulting terms of this document did nothing to assuage the war fever then prevalent in Paris is undeniable, although the full force of the sting was not at once realised. Gower, writing on the 3rd August, says that it "produced very little sensation," and gives as his reason that "the *aristocrates* are dissatisfied with it, and the *démocrates* affect to despise it." The ambassador having been handed his passports, Mr. W. Lindsay communicates much the same news on the 27th inst., but adds with deep significance that, "The public declarations of his Serene Highness have only served to irritate, and nothing can exceed the unanimity and confidence which prevails through the country." "The factions," says Bertrand de Moleville, "did not fail to attribute to the suggestions of the King all the menaces respecting the

safety of himself and his family, and thence concluded that his Majesty was in correspondence with the enemies of the nation."

The following is a translation of this important and exceedingly unwise document. It is dated Coblentz, 25th July:

"To the People of France:

"Their Majesties the Emperor and the King of Prussia having given me the command of the armies assembled by their orders on the French frontier, I have thought it well to tell the inhabitants of that kingdom the motives that have inspired the measures taken by the two sovereigns and the intentions that guide them.

"After having arbitrarily suppressed the rights and the possessions of the German princes in Alsace and Lorraine, troubled and overset public order and their legitimate government, exercised against the sacred person of the King and against his august family violence which is, moreover, repeated and renewed from day to day, those who have usurped the reins of the administration have at last filled up the measure by causing an unjust war to be declared against his Majesty the Emperor, and by attacking his provinces in the Netherlands.

"Several possessions of the German Empire have been drawn into this oppression, and several others have only escaped from a similar danger by yielding to the imperious threats of the dominant party and its emissaries.

"His Prussian Majesty, with his Imperial Majesty, by the ties of a strict and defensive alliance, and himself a preponderant member of the Germanic body, has therefore been unable to excuse himself from going to the aid of his ally and of his fellow-State. And it is under both these heads that he undertakes the defence of that monarch and of Germany.

"To these great interests another object of equal importance must be added, and one that is near to the heart of the two sovereigns: it is that of ending the domestic anarchy of France, of arresting the attacks which are directed against the altar and the throne, of re-establishing the legitimate power, of giving back to the King the freedom and safety of which he is deprived, and of giving him the means to exercise the lawful authority which is his due.

"Convinced as they are that the healthy part of the French people abhors the excesses of a party that enslaves them, and that the majority of the inhabitants are impatiently awaiting the advent of a relief that will permit them to declare themselves openly against the odious schemes of their oppressors, his Majesty the Emperor and his Majesty the King of Prussia call upon them to return at once to the call of reason and justice, of order, of peace. It is in view of these things that I, the undersigned, General Commander-in-Chief of the two armies, declare:

"1. That, led into the present war by irresistible circumstances, the two allied Courts propose no object to themselves but the happiness of France, and do not propose to enrich themselves by annexation.

"2. That they have no intention of meddling with the domestic government of France, but only wish to deliver the King, the Queen, and the royal family from their captivity, and procure for his Most Christian Majesty that freedom which is necessary for him to call such a council as he shall see fit, without danger and without obstacle, and to enable him to work for the good of his subjects according to his promises and as much as may be his concern.

"3. That the combined armies will protect all towns, boroughs, and villages, and the persons and goods of all those that will submit to the King, and that they will

help to re-establish immediately the order and police of France.

"4. That the National Guards are ordered to see to the peace of the towns and country-sides provisionally, and to the security of the persons and goods of all Frenchmen provisionally—that is, until the arrival of the troops of their Royal and Imperial Majesties, or until further orders—under pain of being personally responsible; that, on the contrary, the National Guards who may have fought against the troops of the allied Courts, and who are captured in arms, shall be treated as enemies, and shall be punished as rebels and disturbers of the public peace.

"5. That the generals, officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates of the French troops of the line are equally ordered to return to their old allegiance, and to submit at once to the King, their legitimate sovereign.

"6. That the members of departmental, district, and town councils are equally responsible with their heads and property for all crimes, arson, murders, thefts, and assaults, the occurrence of which they allow, or do not openly and to the common knowledge try to prevent in their jurisdiction; that they shall equally be bound to keep their functions provisionally until his Most Christian Majesty, reinstated in full liberty, has further decreed; or until, in the interval, other orders shall have been given.

"7. That the inhabitants of towns, boroughs, and villages who may dare to defend themselves against the troops of their Imperial and Royal Majesties by firing upon them, whether in the open or from the windows, doors, or apertures of their houses, shall be punished at once with all the rigour of the laws of war, their houses pulled down or burnt. All those inhabitants, on the contrary, of the towns, boroughs, and villages who shall

hasten to submit to their King by opening their gates to the troops of their Majesties shall be placed under the immediate protection of their Majesties, their persons, their goods, their chattels shall be under the safeguard of the laws, and measures will be taken for the general safety of each and all of them.

8.[1] The town of Paris and all its inhabitants without distinction shall be bound to submit on the spot, and without any delay, to the King, and to give that Prince full and entire liberty, and to assure to him and all the royal family that inviolability and respect to which the laws of nature and of nations entitle sovereigns from their subjects. Their Imperial and Royal Majesties render personally responsible for anything that may happen, under peril of their heads, and of military execution without hope of pardon, all members of the National Assembly as of the districts, the municipality, the National Guards, the Justices of the Peace, and all others whom it may concern. Their aforesaid Majesties declare, moreover, on their word and honour as Emperor and King, that if the Palace of the Tuileries be insulted or forced, that if the least violence, the least assault, be perpetrated against their Majesties, the King, the Queen, and the Royal Family, and if steps be not at once taken for their safety, preservation, and liberty, they, their Imperial and Royal Majesties, will take an exemplary and never-to-be-forgotten vengeance by giving up the town of Paris to military execution and to total subversion, and the guilty rebels to the death they have deserved. Their Imperial and Royal Majesties promise, on the contrary, to the inhabitants of Paris to use their good offices with his Most Christian Majesty to obtain pardon for their faults and errors, and to take the most vigorous measures to ensure

[1] Marie Antoinette inspired this particular clause.

their persons and goods if they promptly and exactly obey the above commands.

"Finally, since their Majesties can recognise no laws in France save those that proceed from the King in full liberty, they protest in advance against any declarations that may be made in the name of his Most Christian Majesty, so long as his sacred person, those of the Queen and of the Royal Family, are not really safe, for which end their Imperial and Royal Majesties invite and beg his Most Christian Majesty to point out to what town in the immediate neighbourhood of his frontiers he may judge it best to retire with the Queen and the royal family, under good and sure escort that will be sent him for that purpose, in order that his Most Christian Majesty may be in all safety to call to him such deputies and counsellors as he sees fit, call such councils as may please him, see to the re-establishment of order, and arrange the administration of his kingdom.

"Lastly, I engage myself, in my own private name and in my aforesaid capacity, to cause the troops under my command to observe everywhere a good and exact discipline, promising to treat with mildness and moderation all well-meaning subjects who may show themselves peaceful and submissive, and to use force with those only who may be guilty of resistance and of recalcitrance.

"It is for these reasons that I require and exhort, in the strongest and most instant fashion, all the inhabitants of this kingdom not to oppose themselves to the march and operations of the troops under my command, but rather to give them on all sides a free entry and all the goodwill, aid, and assistance that circumstances may demand.

"Given at our Headquarters of Coblentz, July 25, 1792.

(*Signed*) "CHARLES WILLIAM FERDINAND,
"*Duke of Brunswick-Lunebourg.*"

CHAPTER XXVII

THE ATTACK ON THE TUILERIES AND THE SEPTEMBER MASSACRES

"It is our wish that this insurrection in the cause of liberty should be majestic, as is Liberty herself; holy, as are the rights which she alone can ensure, and worthy to serve as an example to every people, who, to break the fetters of their tyrants, have only to show themselves." BARBAROUX.

Allons, enfants de la patrie,
Le jour de gloire est arrivé;
Contre nous, de la tyrannie,
L'étendard sanglant est levé.
Entendez-vous dans les campagnes
Mugir ces féroces soldats?
Ils viennent jusque dans vos bras
Egorger vos fils, vos compagnes!
Aux armes, citoyens.
Formez vos bataillons;
Marchons, marchons,
Qu'un sang impur abreuve nos sillons.

. . . . .
Que l'amitié, que la patrie
Fassent l'objet de tous nos vœux!
Ayons toujours l'âme nourrie
Des feux qu'ils inspirent tous deux.
Soyons unis, tout est possible,
Nos vils ennemis tomberont;
Alors les Français cesseront
De chanter ce refrain terrible.
Aux armes, citoyens. . . .

"COME, now, Rouget, you are a poet, write and compose us something worth singing." It was Baron Friedrich Dietrich, Mayor of Strassburg, who spoke, the occasion a banquet, and the date the 24th April 1792. The person addressed was a captain of Engineers, by name Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle, by political faith inclined to royalism, and by birth the son of an *avocat au parlement.* It is said with some pretence to authority that after Rouget left the house he walked back to his lodgings obsessed by the idea of a song that would cheer the troops on their lonely march to resist the invaders of *la belle France.* He found his theme, seized his fiddle and played it over. Then he sat down and wrote the six stanzas of which it originally consisted. It was this

stirring hymn, now known as the *Marseillaise*, that was sung by half a thousand National Guards of Marseilles as they marched into Paris on the 30th July with Barbaroux at their head and dragging their cannon behind them. Together with other *fédérés*, these volunteers from the south were to be stationed at Soissons to help swell the camp of 20,000 men originally intended to guard Paris, but which the King's veto had forbidden. Those who had come to the capital for the *Fête de la Fédération* had been entertained by the municipality according to the orders of the Assembly until the 18th July. Aided and abetted by the Jacobins, some of them decided that they could best serve the interests of France by remaining amidst their present surroundings, for it was becoming a settled conviction of this particular section of the community that Louis was the sole cause of the misfortunes that were gathering about the Fatherland. Others, looking at matters from a more practical point of view, felt that their place was with the armies, and that the ultimate fate of the King was not so much a matter of concern as defending the frontiers from Austrians and Prussians.

In the Assembly the dethronement of the King was again mooted on the 23rd July, and some of the sections sent a petition to the same effect. A Secret Directory of Insurrection, inspired by Danton and actively supported by Camille Desmoulins and Santerre, was formed and began its operations. Everything seemed to be tending towards a violent outburst against the King. Did not Brunswick's manifesto prove that the Powers chiefly concerned were ready to go to the most extreme measures on his behalf? If the King were out of the way, if the partnership between him and the nation were dissolved, what had Austria and Prussia left as an excuse for war? Per-

verted reasoning such as this reigned almost supreme. Louis, said Vergniaud, "is the man in whose name war is being waged against us, and who, nevertheless, disposes our military forces as he likes best; the man to whose authority our defeats would be profitable, and who for that very reason is presumed to be more interested in our reverses than our successes."

On the motion of Carnot, it was decreed that any citizen was at liberty to join the National Guard. This meant, of course, that the lowest characters could obtain permission to join the ranks which had hitherto been filled for the most part by men who had royalist tendencies, and it was morally certain that the newcomers would not side with the cause of law and order. Again, it had been suggested that Lafayette should be arrested and brought up for trial. The refusal of the Assembly to do so, notwithstanding renewed attacks on the part of the Left, showed that the majority of the deputies were not prepared to proceed to extreme measures even though the nature of Lafayette's mission was now fully realised. Rumour had it that he would speedily return at the head of his troops to teach a lesson to revolutionary Paris. Despite the endeavours of three of the leaders of the Girondists, namely, Vergniaud, Guadet, and Gensonné, whose tactics at the moment were directed towards advising Louis to "select well-known patriots" to be his ministers "instead of non-entities," their efforts came to nought.

At last the sections of Quinze-Vingts and Mauconseil flung down the gauntlet, secure in the knowledge that whatever they might do would receive the support of many of the others. The Assembly was told in a way that offered no chances of quibbling that if the dethronement of the King were not voted on the 9th August, the

tocsin would ring, and the demand be backed by a substantial armed force. That night the sections elected representatives ready to take the place of the municipal Council. The following day was to see them installed as the new Revolutionary Commune, soon to become all-powerful.

The experience of the 20th June showed that an attack on the Tuileries was to be expected, and measures were therefore taken for the defence of the Palace. The King's first movement was to discuss the matter with his ministers and other officials, including Pétion and Mandat, who was in command of the National Guard. The men upon whom he could rely were not numerous. They consisted of the Swiss Guard and the Constitutional Guard, each about 1500 strong, the National Guard, numbering roughly 2000, and a body of royalists who had gathered in the Tuileries in the belief that perhaps they might be of service. As a matter of fact, they were the cause of dissension, and there was considerable murmuring about "aristocrats" in the ranks of the *bourgeoisie* battalions. Mandat did his best with these forces, stationing some in the gardens and the terrace, others at the bridges so as to prevent communication from opposite banks of the river, and yet more at the Hôtel de Ville. The arrangements at the Pont Neuf broke down entirely. Word was received from the municipality that the guns were to be removed, whereupon the soldiers gave preference to the civic authority and refused to obey their commander. Quite early in the morning Louis, resplendent in an evening suit of violet, reviewed the troops, and, according to all accounts, made a sorry figure. Madame Campan asserts that he was "pale, as if life was no longer left in him," and that afterwards Marie Antoinette remarked that "All is lost; the King has shown no

energy. A review like this has done us more harm than good." A little later Mandat was requested to go to the Hôtel de Ville, where he was questioned as to the arrangements he had made. He was also interrogated by a committee of the sections, who told him that as he refused to send the Swiss Guards back to their barracks, he would be suspended from his position as Commander-in-chief of the National Guard in favour of Santerre. A few minutes afterwards he was assassinated as he left the building. Before the news was received at the Tuileries Roederer had already persuaded Louis to vacate the château. "The danger," said he, "is beyond description. Defence is impossible. Of the National Guard there is but a small number on whom we can count. The rest will join the assailants at the first attack. Your only resource is to seek refuge with the Assembly." Nobody attempted to interfere with the family as they made their way, the Dauphin kicking the leaves of an early autumn as he trotted along until a tall grenadier stooped down and picked him up. They were received with consideration by the deputies, and accommodated in the newspaper reporters' box, where they heard the debate which robbed Louis of his crown.

Baron de Frénilly, who was enrolled in the Filles de Saint Thomas battalion of the National Guard, took up his station on the grand terrace of the Tuileries. He gives us an excellent account of the defences of the palace:

"The gates were closed," he says. "Nothing was then easier than to defend the Tuileries against a sudden attack. On the Manège side, as on that of the river, there stretched for the entire length of the garden a wall whose only entrances were two small gates near the Château. As to the two narrow Passage des Feuillants and Passage de l'Orangerie, they could have been adequately protected

by a gabion and four men. On the Place Louis XV side there was a deep moat, a veritable fortification that could only be crossed by the Pont Tournant, which did duty as a drawbridge. On the opposite side there was not, as now, the immense and empty Carrousel.[1] From the wing which served for the flight of Henry III to that of the Rue de Rivoli, this square, then infinitely smaller and more irregular, was separated from the château by three court-yards, accompanied by out-buildings. The access was narrow and winding, whilst the walls of the three court-yards still further increased the difficulty of approach. Finally, after closing the Pont Royal, the Guichet de Marigny, much narrower than it is to-day, and the Passage Dauphin Gate, the only way of approaching the château was by the narrow Rue Saint Nicaise or by the circuitous Rue de l'Echelle. What treason on the one hand and stupidity on the other were necessary to lose that day!"

The only thing about the long night vigil that Frénilly remembered was the presence of Pétion, regarding whom he makes one or two unkind but probably justifiable comments. He mentions that as the Mayor was regarded "merely as a spy with an official scarf, a dozen of our grenadiers surrounded him and honourably promenaded him about until daybreak, without giving him time to rest or see anything."

Two fatal mistakes were made. The first was when one of the gates was opened—by whom nobody knows—and Westermann and his mob poured in and entered the palace; the second was the apparently accidental discharge of a gun. In the first phase of the fighting the Guards scored, and succeeded in clearing the court. The King,

[1] It must be remembered that Frénilly wrote his *Recollections* (London, 1909) between 1837-48.

hearing the firing, sent a message to the Swiss Guards to leave the château, and some of them carried out his instructions, to be afterwards disarmed and detained by order of the Assembly. Those who remained in the building did so either because they were not told of the order or happened not to hear it. They held their positions with desperate courage until they were forced to abandon them, and, making a last stand in the Place Louis XV, were mown down by mounted gendarmes, who had long since cast in their lot with the insurgents. Napoleon saw a good deal of what happened, and said that the palace was attacked by the "vilest rabble," and that none of his battlefields made such an impression of masses of dead men as the mangled bodies of the Swiss in the gardens. He also gave it as his opinion that had Louis appeared on horseback he would have conquered.

The account of Dr. John Moore, an Englishman who was staying in Paris, is particularly interesting as showing how the storming of the Tuileries affected a foreigner and a non-combatant.

"Having fallen asleep about three," he writes, "we were awakened at nine by the firing of cannon, and were told that the château was attacked. Soon after, we heard the cry of 'To arms, citizens, to arms! They slaughter your parents, your brethren, your sons!' and we saw men running half frantic through the streets, exclaiming in that manner. . . .

"As soon as I was dressed I went into the street; a party of the National Guards, with a number of citizens armed, were marching towards the Tuileries—another body of men followed soon after, dragging several cannons along the Quai de Mazarin, where I was, to the Pont Royal. Some men flying from the Tuileries along this bridge were killed by the National Guards before they

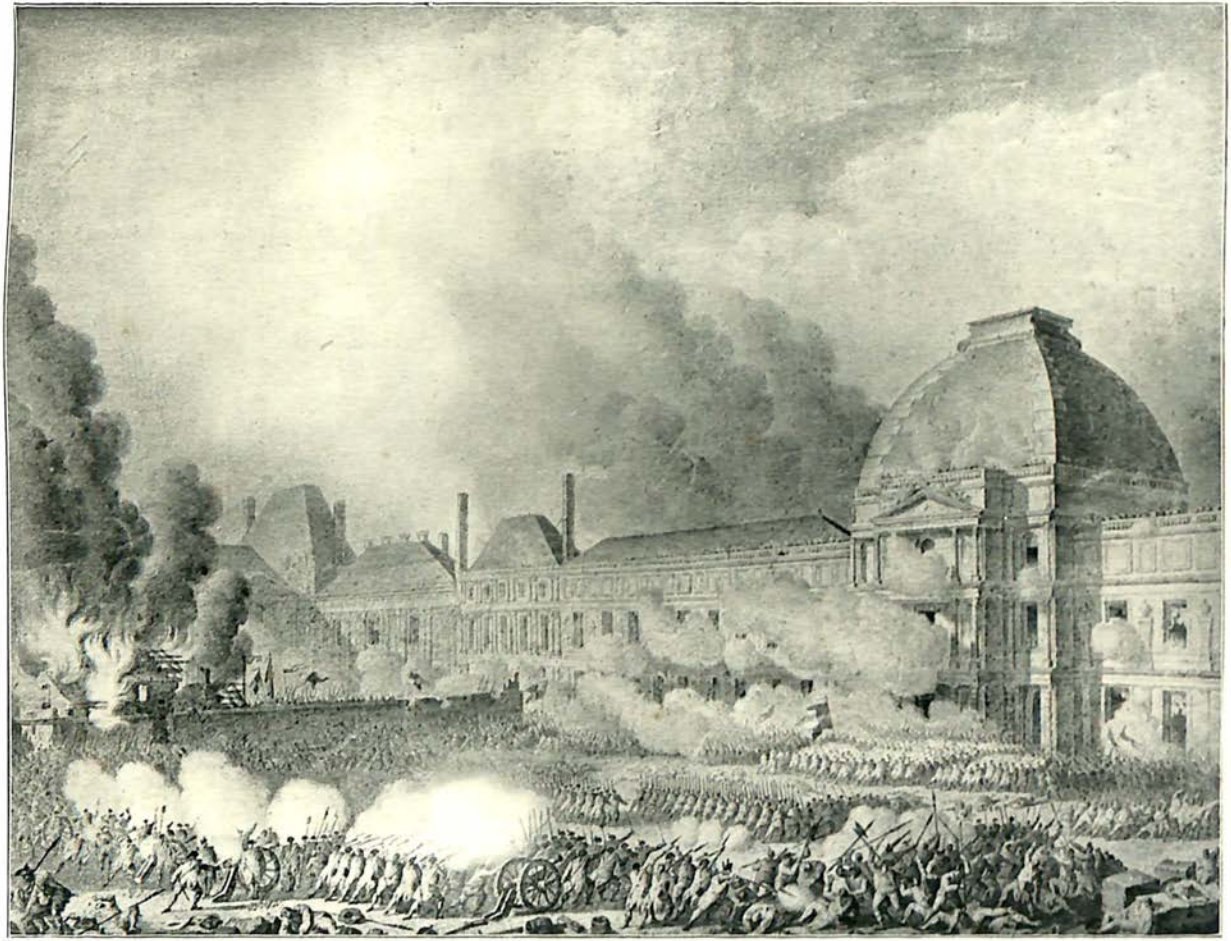


Photo Giraudon

THE CAPTURE OF THE TUILERIES, AUGUST 10, 1792

(*From an original drawing by Prieur in the Louvre*)

reached that end to which the cannon were advancing. Those cannon being mounted on the bridge, were repeatedly discharged against that part of the château which looks to the Seine. Some women who stood near me on the Quai de Voltaire, as soon as they heard the first discharge, clapped their hands, and cried, 'Bravo! Bravo!'

"In the mean time there was some firing of musketry from the windows of the Louvre facing the river—a few people were killed and wounded on the quays. Those who were on the side next the Louvre had run from the quay to the brink of the river, that they might be sheltered from the shot by the parapet. A party of National Guards who marched along the Quai Mazarin, as often as they saw a group of people conversing together, called, *Bas les motions*,[1] and dispersed them—the officer at the same time advising all who were without arms to retire to their houses. A little after, as a body of pikemen hurried past, one of them in a very decisive style pointed me out as an aristocrat. Such an accusation in the streets of Paris, any time these four years, would have exposed a man to insult: in the present circumstances, when execution is generally the immediate consequence of accusation, it might have proved fatal; but the *valet de place*, who accompanied me, declared, that so far from being an aristocrat, or anything like it, I was *un Anglais*. '*Bon!*' cried the pikemen, and continued their course.

[1] "No motions. The questions moved and debated in clubs respecting the measures of Government are called motions. From clubs and societies, such as the Jacobins, they were extended to coffee-houses, particularly the Café de Foi in the Palais Royal; and at length the same kind of debates were carried on in the groups formed by people who met accidentally in the public walks and gardens. The guards did not think this a proper moment for such debates or motions."—*Note by Dr. Moore.*

"After this admonition I retired to the house of my acquaintance, in the Rue Jacob, from whence I went, a little after, to the Hotel de Moscovie. In the streets I met with great numbers of the National Guards and *fédérés* returning home, all of them with pieces of the red uniform of the Swiss Guards who had been killed stuck as trophies on the point of their bayonets. . . .

"I went this morning," Dr. Moore records on the 11th inst., "to see the places where the action of yesterday happened. The naked bodies of the Swiss—for they were already stripped—lay exposed on the ground. I saw a great number on the terrace, immediately before the palace of the Tuileries; some lying single in different parts of the gardens, and some in heaps, one above another, particularly near the terrace of the Feuillants.

"The garden and adjacent courts were crowded with spectators, among whom there was a considerable proportion of women, whose curiosity it was evident was at least equal to their modesty.

"The bodies of the National Guards, of the citizens of the faubourgs, and of the *fédérés*, have been already removed by their friends; those of the Swiss only lie exposed in that shocking manner. Of about 800 or 1000 of these, who were yesterday murdered in the Tuileries, I am told there are not 200 left alive.

"Seeing a number of people going up the grand staircase of the palace, to see the ravage that was made in all the rooms by the action of yesterday, I intermingled with the crowd, and had ascended half-way, when I heard the shrieks of someone above, and soon after the body of a man was carried down. I was told that he had been detected in the act of stealing some of the furniture belonging to the palace, and was instantly put to death by the people around him.

" . . . I descended to the terrace, and took another melancholy walk among the bodies of those whom I had seen two days before in all the pride of health and military pomp. In point of size and looks, I do not suppose there is a finer battalion of infantry in Europe than they formed at that time.

"After they gave way, they were slaughtered by those who kept aloof while they resisted. Some were pursued through the streets, and dragged from the shops and houses whither they had fled for shelter. . . .

"From the gardens of the Tuileries I walked through the centre gate of the palace into the court, and the Carrousel, where the action first began. At the very beginning a number of the crowd were killed and wounded at the bottom of the great stairs, by an unexpected fire from the top of the first flight of stairs. Some of the Swiss themselves, who were intermingled and conversing with the people, were killed by this fire. The bodies of the Swiss were lying in various parts of the area.

"The barracks of the Swiss Guards, which divide this large area from the Carrousel, had been set on fire yesterday, and are still burning. Many of the bodies were thrown into the flames—I saw some half consumed."

On this same day—the 11th—the King was provisionally suspended and the civil list suppressed. Already the new Commune had asserted itself by practically demanding the dethronement of Louis, and that while the palace was being stormed. A few hours later Monsieur Louis Capet, his wife and family, were handed over to its none too tender mercies. Deeming the Luxembourg too unsafe a gaol for the erstwhile royal family, the Commune decided that the tower of the Temple afforded fewer opportunities of escape. Every

possible precaution was taken to isolate them from the outside world, even to the extent of erecting a high wall and tearing down adjacent buildings.

Although the constitution had been completed so short a time, the deputies were persuaded by Vergniaud that a new Assembly, to be called the National Convention, and elected by manhood suffrage without distinction, should be summoned for the purpose of considering how France should be governed. The Girondists Roland, Clavière, and Servan were restored to the offices they formerly occupied, Lebrun-Tondu became Minister of Foreign Affairs, Monge Minister of Marine, and, most important of all, Danton was appointed Minister of Justice. Neither the Assembly nor the executive became the most powerful agency in France, but the Commune, which issued orders and saw that they were obeyed. Men of such extreme opinions as Marat, Robespierre, Camille Desmoulins, Dubois-Dubais, Billaud-Varennes, Hébert, and Chaumette became members of it and wielded all but supreme power. They knew their own mind, and as a consequence whatever they undertook they usually carried to a successful issue.

Lafayette, still chafing to strike a blow on behalf of the Constitutionalists, again determined to place himself at the head of his troops and march on Paris. Time and circumstances were against him; he had procrastinated until it was too late. The soldiers, imbued with republican opinions, resolutely refused to do his bidding, with the result that he was denounced in the Assembly as a traitor. With some of his companions, including Latour-Maubourg and Alexandre Lameth, he crossed the frontier, but was arrested by the Austrians and kept in captivity until 1797, when Napoleon secured his release. He was succeeded in his command at Sédan by Dumouriez.

Photo Bouchetal

RELICS OF THE PRISONERS OF THE TEMPLE

Furniture and personal belongings used by Louis XVI and the Royal Family during their imprisonment in the Tower of the Temple. The bed and the dressing-table are Marie Antoinette's. The relics are now arranged in the Carnavalet Museum.

The reports of Lafayette's flight, of the fall of Longwy at the hands of the Prussians and their *émigré* allies, and of the firing of the first shots by the peasants of La Vendée in support of the monarchy and the Church afforded Paris food for bitter reflection. The item regarding the fallen idol was comparatively trivial and soon dismissed; the others were of consummate and immediate importance. The Assembly, menaced by the Commune, and knowing that with the threatened fall of Verdun the road to Paris was open, at once determined on the formation of an army of 30,000 volunteers, and authorised that a rigorous search should be made for arms and suspects. This latter was undertaken on the motion of Danton, and was carried out by the special section of the Commune presided over by Marat, whose policy he himself declared in the words, "Death, death—that is the punishment which should await all traitors who are bent upon destroying us." Unfortunately those who were summarily dealt with were not always "traitors"; it was only necessary to be a suspect.

The domiciliary visits are thus described by Peltier, an ardent Royalist whose statistics are far from accurate, but whose veracity can scarcely be called into question in the following statement:

"Let the reader," he writes, "fancy to himself a vast metropolis, the streets of which were a few days before alive with the concourse of carriages and with citizens constantly passing and repassing, suddenly struck with the dead silence of the grave before sunset on a fine summer evening. All the shops are shut; everybody retires into the interior of his house, trembling for life and property; all are in fearful expectation of the events of a night in which even the efforts of despair are not likely to afford the least resource to any individual. The sole

object of the domiciliary visits, it is pretended, is to search for arms, yet the barriers are shut and guarded with the strictest vigilance, and boats are stationed on the river, at regular distances, filled with armed men. Everyone supposes himself to be informed against. Everywhere persons and property are put into concealment. Everywhere are heard the interrupted sounds of the muffled hammer, with cautious knock completing the hiding-place. Roofs, garrets, sinks, chimneys—all are just the same to fear, incapable of calculating any risk. One man squeezed up behind the wainscot, which had been nailed back on him, seems to form a part of the wall; another is suffocated with fear and heat between two mattresses; a third, rolled up in a cask, loses all sense of existence by the tension of his sinews. Apprehension is stronger than power. Men tremble, but they do not shed tears: the heart shivers, the eye is dull, and the breast contracted. Women on this occasion display prodigies of tenderness and intrepidity. It was by them that most of the men were concealed. It was one o'clock in the morning when the domiciliary visits began. Patrols, consisting of sixty pikemen, were in every street. The nocturnal tumult of so many armed men; the incessant knocks to make people open their doors; the crash of those which were burst off their hinges; and the continual uproar and revelling which took place throughout the night in all the public-houses, formed a picture which will never be effaced from my memory."

Dr. John Moore, whose acquaintance we have already made, had a happier experience:

"In consequence of a mandate from the municipality of Paris, which seems to be the sole executive power, each section was ordered to choose commissaries for

making a general search for arms and suspected persons. This search was made accordingly in the course of last night and this morning. The commissaries were attended with a body of the National Guards, and all avenues of the sections were watched to prevent any person from escaping. They did not come to our hotel till about six in the morning. I attended them through every room, and opened every door of our apartment. They behaved with great civility; we had no arms but pistols, which lay openly on the chimney. They admired the nicety of the workmanship of one pair, but never offered to take them."

These measures heralded the series of outrages committed at the instigation of the Commune and by its agents in the first week of September. "How can we go away to the war and leave behind us three thousand prisoners, who may break out and massacre our wives and our children?"[1] Such was the question which spread like a contagious disease. The frontier had been crossed on the 19th August. Verdun was about to fall—it surrendered on this fatal 2nd September, when the orgies began—and with it the last barrier against the Austrians. Therefore the solution of the problem was the extermination of the suspects who had been arrested as sympathisers with the enemies of France ere the levies marched against the enemy. That the Germans would carry out the declaration made by Brunswick and take "an exemplary and never-to-be-forgotten vengeance on the town of Paris" was not to be doubted. The palace of the Tuileries, about which the eighth clause of the document betrayed such evident concern, had already been forced. That the restoration of the *ancien régime* would follow the restoration of Louis XVI admitted of no argument

[1] H. Morse Stephens, vol. ii. p. 141.

in the minds of those who sought to inculcate patriotism by terror. They did not know that the *émigrés* regarded a constitution from the hands of Austria as "the worst of all evils."

Maillard, conspicuous in the attack on the Bastille and the march to Versailles, was placed at the head of one of the several extemporised tribunals which dealt out rough justice. None of the constituted authorities attempted to interfere, and the National Guards did nothing. Amongst the prominent personages who perished, either at the hands of the people or of the judges, were the Archbishop of Arles, who died with over one hundred priests who had refused to take the oath and were imprisoned in the Convent of the Carmelites; Montmorin, once Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Princesse de Lamballe, friend of Marie Antoinette. The chief responsibility for the massacre of over one thousand men and women attaches to "volcanic, crabbed, and unsociable" Marat, but this responsibility is shared by Danton, who certainly saved several people, but allowed the general proceedings to go on. Of the two parties in the State, the monarchical and the republican, the latter was in the minority, but could be relied upon to fight the enemies of France; the other would refuse to march, and would spend its time exciting the capital in favour of the invaders: "Your defenders, placed between two fires, will perish in repelling them." Such was Danton's reasoning, and he may have been sincere. The massacres in Paris had their aftermath in the provinces, in particular at Meaux, Lyons, and Rheims.

The Convention met on the 21st September and proclaimed the Republic; the 22nd was the first day of the year 1 of French liberty according to the new calendar, the twelve months of which were divided into

three *décades* of ten days, with a holiday on each tenth day. Neither of these dates in September, however, were of such immediate interest as the 20th, for on that day Kellermann forced the enemy to retreat at Valmy, not far from the town of Sainte Menehould, for ever associated with the flight to Varennes, and within almost one hundred miles of Paris. The French held their ground, and if the fight scarcely deserves the name of a battle, it secured the retreat of the allies and aroused immense enthusiasm throughout the army and in those centres of population which held revolutionary opinions. It was a victory that created confidence, and that was exactly the kind of victory that was needed. Had Brunswick really wished to march on Paris, and had he exercised some energy in the endeavour, no doubt he could have done so, notwithstanding that some of his troops had fallen ill of dysentery, and the bad weather showed no signs of improvement. He decided that the time had not yet arrived for him to carry out the threats of the Declaration, and accordingly entered into an arrangement with Dumouriez to suspend hostilities. His troops were gradually withdrawn until they crossed the Rhine.

Goethe, who "had heard so much of the cannon-fever" that he wished to experience it, was present at this cannonade near the hills of the Argonne. The Prussian outworks of La Lune, he says, "presented the wildest aspect. The roofs were shot to pieces: the corn-stacks scattered about, the bodies of men mortally wounded stretched upon them here and there; and occasionally a spent cannon-ball fell and rattled among the ruins of the tile roofs." When he was asked what he thought of the engagement, he replied with the wisdom and prophetic insight of a seer, "From this place, and from this day forth, commences a new era in the world's history; and you can all say that you were present at its birth."

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE PASSING OF LOUIS CAPET

"Events make more traitors than opinions."—CHATEAUBRIAND.

IT will be remembered that in the Legislative Assembly every deputy who had occupied a place in its predecessor was disqualified from re-election. This self-denying ordinance did not apply to the Convention, and no fewer than 263 of the 749 members had played a part in one or other of the two previous Assemblies. Siéyès, Louvet, Barère, Camille Desmoulins, the brothers Robespierre, Danton, Barbaroux, Marat, Legendre, Vergniaud, Brissot, Isnard, Condorcet, Buzot, Pétion, the Duke of Orleans (no longer maintaining his title, but calling himself Philippe Egalité), Grégoire, constitutional Bishop of Blois, Larévellière-Lépeaux, and a score of other men either prominent or destined to become so, found a seat on the benches of the Salle du Manège.

So strident had been the march of revolutionary opinion that in the new Assembly the Constitutionalists as such had almost disappeared. The Girondists now sat on the Right, and gave place, so far as advanced views were concerned, to the Jacobins of the Left and to the Mountain, the extreme Left. At the outset the Girondists maintained their power in the Government, but it soon became evident that the middle group, known as "the Plain," which could throw its weight into the scales of either party, as the Centre had done in the Legislative Assembly, was not going to support the idealists associated with Roland. Before the process of intimidation

THE PRUSSIAN RETREAT AFTER THE FIRST CAMPAIGN AGAINST REVOLUTIONARY FRANCE

A satirical etching in the Bibliothèque Nationale issued early in 1793. A legend tells how "the Prussians thought they were coming as masters to dictate to Paris and the whole of France; but at the vigorous resistance of the French, combined with the intemperateness of the season and the diseases which desolated and destroyed their army, they were forced to retrace their steps, having lost horses, artillery, and baggage."

began, the members of the Plain voted with some pretence to equity; afterwards they fell in with the demands of the "Mountaineers." The Girondists stood for moderation and order; they were the conservatives of the House, and although, as a modern historian puts it, "the political creed of the two parties appeared at first to be much the same," the moral differences that separated them "were at once conspicuous."[1]

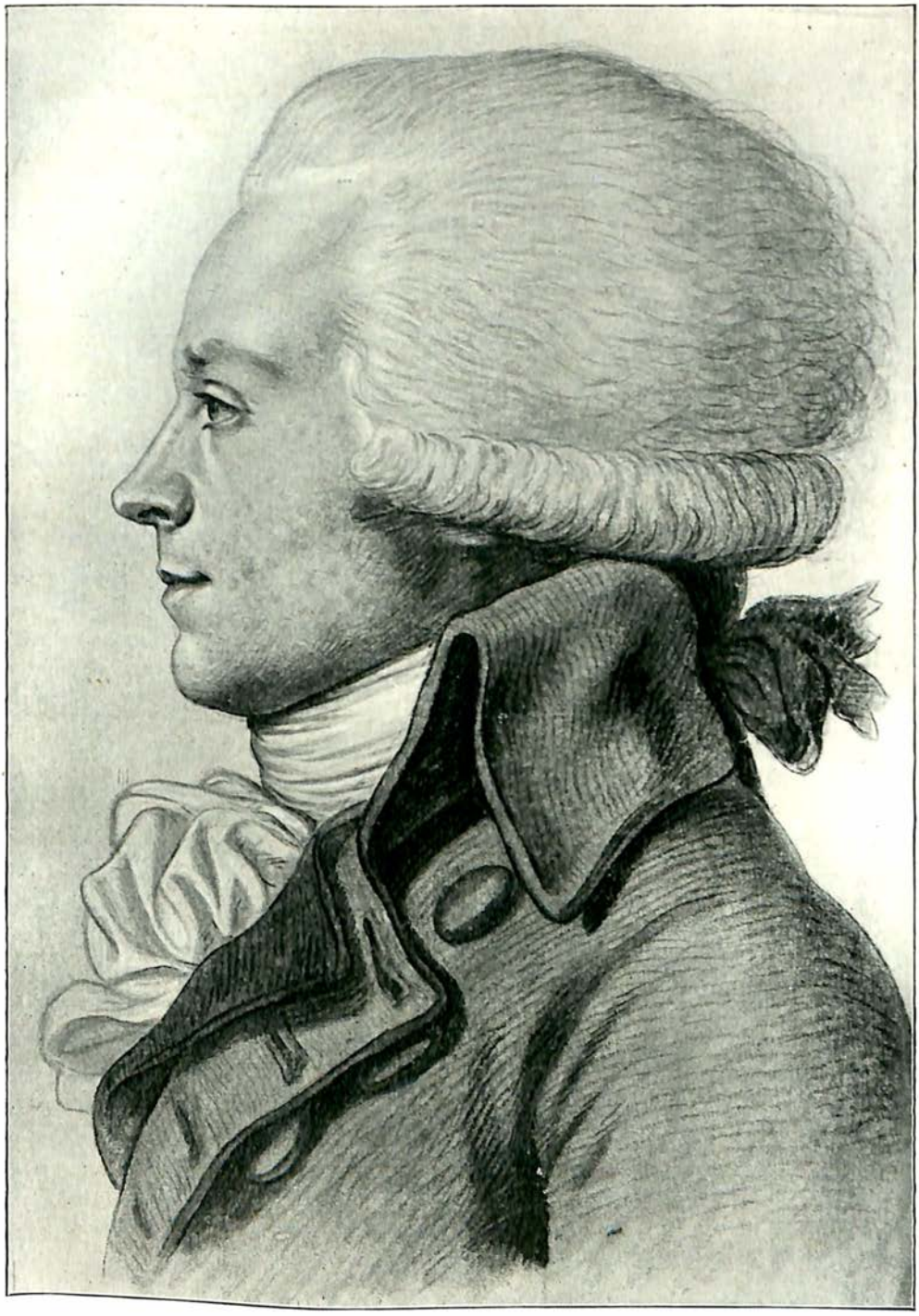
The Mountain, small in numbers but resolute in purpose, enjoyed the favour of the Commune, now the supreme authority in the State, and had in addition the support of the Jacobin Club and of the mob in the galleries. As a policy, individual liberty was regarded as of far less importance than a strong central Government. The excess to which this idea was carried by the Jacobins eventually wearied some of their most able followers, including Danton.

Although both the Girondists and the Mountain were in accord in voting the Republic, they were speedily in opposition. We who study the period from a distance, and with the aid of innumerable memoirs and documents, know that it was evident from the first that the kind of republic for which the Girondists worked was scarcely likely to materialise amidst all the dissensions that agitated the whole of France. Obviously the Constitutionalists were no more with them than was the democracy, and as they spurned anything partaking of the nature of conciliation, they found themselves between the upper and the nether mill-stones. Averse to violence, they shrank from the idea of maintaining power with the assistance of the mob, and the mob was already paramount. Divided in opinion, they fought a party which had definite ends and a relentless tenacity. They opened fire with

[1] Fyffe's *History of Modern Europe* (ed. 1895), p. 33.

their oratorical guns on Robespierre, Danton, and Marat—the first two because, in their opinion, they aimed at a dictatorship, the last because they held him to be responsible for the September massacres. The Girondists failed to bring down their quarry.

Many attempts have been made to understand the aims of Maximilien Robespierre, but to this day he remains something of an enigma. Although the general consensus of opinion is against the harsh verdicts of his early biographers, perhaps his austerity and the way he triumphed against a multitude of disadvantages has led certain writers in an age somewhat given to literary whitewashing and hero-worship to gloss over the dark phases of his career, and to regard him as the scape-goat of the Committee of Public Safety. That he had a sincere hatred of tyranny long before he was elected to the States-General is evident; that he was charitably inclined is equally well proven. He was a logician who brought his science to bear on the everyday things of life, forgetting that the people of this world are mainly illogical. Napoleon, whose opinions of men and matters are not to be lightly regarded, held that had "the Incorruptible" lived to carry on his work after destroying the revolutionary factions he would have re-established order. He was certainly more than "a man of a day, a petty leader of riots," as Barère called him. It was Lamartine, the historian of the Girondists, who said of Robespierre's constitution that "God and the people, justice and humanity," inspired its every page. It is an ironic comment on the policy Robespierre afterwards adopted that the first essay of any consequence penned by Rousseau's greatest disciple was a plea for the abolition of capital sentences against criminals, a subject on which Marat also wrote. This cold, calculating man, insignifi-



MAXIMILIEN DE ROBESPIERRE (1758–1794)

(*From an original drawing from the Cabinet Boze, now at Versailles*)

cant in appearance and without eloquence, who sought to create a new France by re-fashioning its people, who professed to hold the Supreme Being in the greatest awe, was a fanatic whose principal article of faith was that terrorism during a time of revolution was akin to virtue. Doubtless he thought that in killing those whom he believed were holding back the people from the Promised Land of Liberty he was acting the part of the destroying angel—that in putting them to death he was saving their souls from the greatest of all crimes. It is certain that towards the end of his career Robespierre lived in constant dread of a reaction against himself and his ruthless methods, and this may have made him all the more anxious to remove his enemies. This does not condone the offence, but palliates it to some extent. Let those who are merciful remember that he erected the *Carrés d'Atalante*, "so that the old men might watch the floral games of youth."

At the end of a violent discussion in the National Assembly, when the word "Republic" was breathed in a whisper and that seldom, Chateaubriand saw a deputy mount the tribune—"a man of common appearance, with a sallow and inanimate countenance; his hair neatly curled, and dressed like the man-servant of a respectable family, or like a village notary who is careful of his person. He read a long and tiresome report, which was not listened to." On asking his name, Chateaubriand was informed that it was Robespierre. "The men with shoes," he adds, "were about to leave the *salons*, and already the wooden clogs knocked at the door."

The criticism of Robespierre, Danton, and Marat in the Convention was followed by an onslaught on the part of Roland against the massacres, the ever-growing power of the Commune, and the machinations of agitators. The occasion was made an opportunity for another attack

on Robespierre, whom Louvet accused of "calumniating the best patriots," and on members who were connected with the municipality: "The revolution of the 10th August," he said, "belongs to all, but that of the 2nd September belongs to them, and to none but them!" The attack was well directed, but not sustained, and although Robespierre's defence was extremely feeble, he won the day. A guard of 4000 men from the various departments was proposed by Buzot, with the object of securing some kind of protection against violence for the Convention. "It is not sufficient," he said, "to call oneself republican and to submit to new tyrants." The proposition was perfectly reasonable, but the opposition, unwilling to let slip the slightest opportunity of injuring the Girondists, and keenly intent on securing the goodwill of the faubourgs, at once combated the notion, and turned it to their own advantage by setting abroad rumours that the Girondists wished to establish "a federal government to rule over us by their departments," as Chabot asserted at the Jacobin Club. In the Convention Danton declared that "France should be indivisible," and proposed that those who desired to divide the country piecemeal should be put to death.

After Valmy[1] the war assumed something of the character of a crusade. Savoy and the Rhine valley were occupied by the raw levies of France, the former with practically no resistance, the latter after the capture of Spires, Worms, Mainz, and Frankfort by Custine. Dumouriez, flushed with his previous success, crossed into the Austrian Netherlands, where he defeated the Austrian whitecoats commanded by Clerfait and Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen at Jemappes on the 6th November 1792. The enemy occupied an entrenched camp upon the heights of Mons and Berlaimont, covering the latter place.

[1] See *ante*, p. 401.

THE BATTLE OF JEMAPPES IN ITS EARLY STAGES

(From an etching by Bertaux after drawings made on the spot by Boizot, Captain of Artillery, and Gerbel, Engineering Captain. From a copy in the Collection Hennin, reproduced by special permission of the French Government)

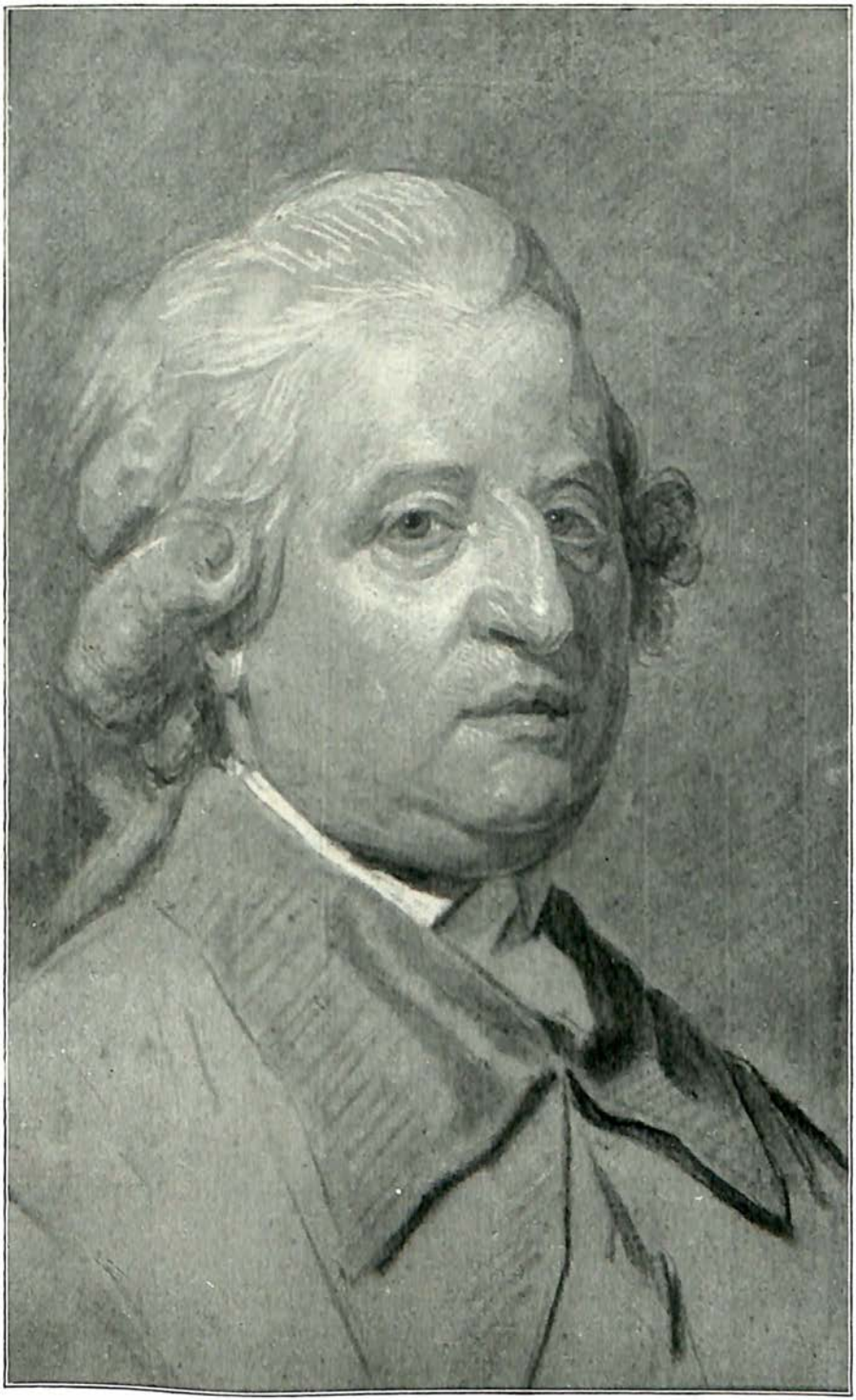
"A discharge from the twelve-pounder battery announced the hour of noon," says a soldier who fought in this battle, and was afterwards to be known to history as Marshal Macdonald. "The army advanced upon the enemy, and opened the attack with plenty of determination. The firing became very brisk, and the resistance obstinate. Obstacles such as entrenchments, breastworks, *abattis*, and *chevaux de frise* favoured the defence; they were troublesome, but not insurmountable. However, our lines began to reel, and even to fall back. Dumouriez was at hand with a remedy; but General d'Harville, who was to support our right and turn the enemy's left, did not arrive, notwithstanding repeated orders to him to hasten his march. Our left did not advance; the General went to discover the reason, and recognised the difficulty of forcing the Austrians' right. Our advanced guard, commanded by Beurnonville, on the right of the line, had just been repulsed; a second charge had produced no better result. Our centre was stationary, and losing many men. The Duc de Chartres, who was commanding it, received orders to try to pierce that of the enemy, or so to fix their attention as to prevent them from withdrawing any men, while, with a few fresh troops whom he would himself command, Dumouriez would make another effort on his right.

"I had just informed him that the head of General d'Harville's column had appeared at last, but that he would require some hours and a little rest before he could execute the movement required of him in order to turn the enemy's left from the formidable position it occupied. Dumouriez left me with the Duc de Chartres, who desired me to bring him a regiment of dragoons left in reserve. While this regiment was coming up we saw Dumouriez and Beurnonville rush forward at the head of the advanced

guard, and, after a feeble resistance on the part of the Austrians, we saw our men crowning the heights. This rapid and decisive attack, coupled with the advance of D'Harville on our extreme right, appeared to decide the enemy to retreat, as they did not wish to expose themselves to having the road to Brussels closed against them, an operation which was clearly indicated by the movement of this body. The Duc de Chartres, as soon as he perceived the progress and success of the advanced guard, ordered his troops to charge. The positions so long defended were overcome, and I myself led the regiment of dragoons at a gallop to the heights, where they still found some work to do; but we only entered Mons the next day, after the Austrians had evacuated it."

This splendid victory, which was a far more strenuous struggle than the cannonade of Valmy, still further enthused the Republican troops and the nation, and ere long the Austrian Netherlands and the bishopric of Liége were in the hands of the French. On the 16th November, two days after Dumouriez entered Brussels, the Convention at Paris enlarged the sphere of the war by decreeing that the passage of the Scheldt should be free to all nations, and Antwerp an open port. This was, of course, in defiance of the treaty of 1788, guaranteed amongst other Powers by England, which gave the exclusive navigation of the river to Holland. It was also proposed on this same eventful day that if the Austrians entered the neutral country of Holland, Dumouriez should be instructed to pursue them, and this was actually decreed on the 30th inst.

In his speech on the 1st February 1793 Pitt maintains that "France can have no right to annul the stipulations relative to the Scheldt, unless she has also the right to set aside, equally, all the other treaties between all the Powers



THE LAST PORTRAIT OF LOUIS CAPET

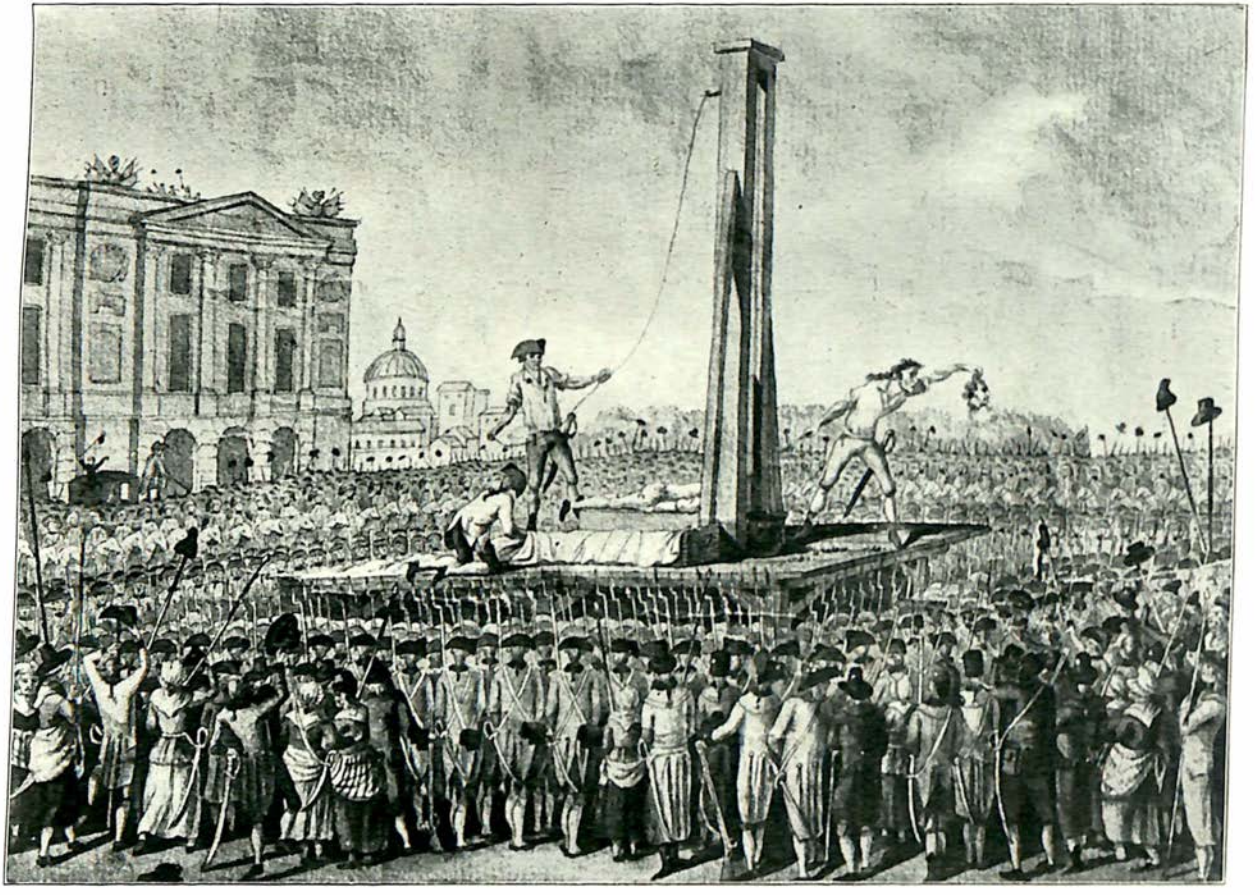
(Painted in the Temple by Ducreux three days before Louis' execution. Now in the Musée Carnavalet)

of Europe, and all the other rights of England, or of her allies." Yet three days before the great question of the Scheldt was decided by the Convention, we find the same minister regarding the Republic in his usual peaceful and optimistic way. "Perhaps," he writes, "some opening may arise which may enable us to contribute to the termination of the war between different Powers in Europe, leaving France—which I believe is the best way—to arrange its own internal affairs as it can."

The Constituent Assembly had publicly renounced all aggression; the Convention showed by the occupation of Savoy, Nice, the Rhine provinces, and Belgium that this praiseworthy notion had been abandoned. An attack on Holland was regarded as a certainty in all the Courts of Europe. Unless Pitt was to break his word, and England to renounce her obligations to defend the land of dykes and windmills, it became likewise a certainty that Great Britain would be embroiled. It was Napoleon who said that Antwerp in the hands of France was a loaded pistol held to England's head—a fact that was fully appreciated on both sides of the Channel. The crisis was aggravated by the famous decree of the 19th November, to the effect that the Convention, "in the name of the French nation," would assist all peoples wishing to recover their liberty. This was followed on the 15th December by the declaration that in all countries entered by French armies the generals should immediately announce the abolition of all feudal rights and privileges, and proclaim the sovereignty of the people and the suppression of existing authorities. A provisional administration was then to be nominated, in which the nobility and all who had held official positions would be ineligible. Any nation that wished to retain its prince and privileged orders, or to enter into an accommodation with them, was to be regarded as an enemy of France.

A fortnight before this grandiloquent and menacing message was proclaimed, the trial of Louis by the Convention was determined upon. Was he guilty or innocent of conspiracy against public liberty and national safety? Such was the question to be answered. The Girondists, realising that there was practically no hope for the monarch if he were brought to the bar, raised their voice against such a proceeding, but as the Mountain was for dispensing with legal formalities, and executing the King without delay, some of the worshippers of Plutarch gave their consent. By doing so there was a chance, although a slight one, that the support they had lost in Paris might be regained. Malesherbes, Tronchet, and Desèze defended Louis, but the verdict returned was "Guilty." On the 21st January 1793 the heir of all the accumulated misfortunes of his line was permitted to pay his last visit to his family in the Temple. The sacrament was administered to him at the hands of the Abbé Edgeworth, an Irish-born non-juror who had dared to request this favour of the Executive Council. Thus fortified, the monarch awaited his end with a calmness that betrayed not the slightest dread of the coming ordeal.

Five minutes before the chimes in the steeples of the churches of Paris struck the quarter-hour after ten on the morning of the 21st, the "son of St. Louis" had paid the death penalty.



"The Tragic End of Louis XVI"

(From a fine water-colour drawing with this title, by an unknown artist, in the Carnavalet Museum. It appears to be closely contemporary with the event)

CHAPTER XXIX

THE FALL OF THE GIRONDISTS

"Let us drink the blood of the enemies of humanity."—DANTON.

The National Convention of France had "flung down to the kings the head of a king as the gage of battle." The phrase is Danton's; the fact is self-evident, for on the 1st February war was proclaimed against England and Holland. This led to the formation of a coalition against France which was joined during the following months of 1793 by Spain, Portugal, Naples, Tuscany, and the Papal States. Pitt declared that "the stability of our happy constitution, the security and honour of his Majesty's crown, and the preservation of our laws, our liberty, and our religion are all involved in the issue of the present contest," and that "the good order of every European government and the happiness of the whole human race" were threatened by the conduct of the French. The Royalists welcomed the hostile decision of the Convention as likely to bring disaster to the Republic and a return of the old order of things. Their political opponents were sadly disillusioned when they found that those who sympathised with them in the United Kingdom were exceedingly few and totally incapable of organising a revolution that would compel the greater part of England's forces to remain at home. Fox called attention to the insulting terms of Brunswick's proclamation, and drew lessons from the second partition of Poland by Russia and Prussia, which had been brought about in January 1793. This unhappy country remained a bone-

of contention until the autumn of 1795, when Austria and the Powers already mentioned finally divided the spoil. It had its influence on the course of the Revolution, because none of the allies trusted each other regarding it, and was mortally afraid of losing its share of territory. The dilatory movements of Austria and Prussia in 1792 are to be partly accounted for by the Polish problem.

In Belgium, whose inhabitants were likewise expected to welcome advanced opinions, less headway was made than was anticipated. The advantages of the new order of things were preached without being put into practice. The people discovered that Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity were high-sounding words that meant much but brought little beyond confiscation and plunder. It was upon this country that the allies made their first move. The good fortune which had hitherto attended the French forsook them. Defeat awaited the troops under the Comte de Valence in Louvain, they were compelled to give up the siege of Maestricht, and Dumouriez, returning from the invasion of Holland to save Belgium, fought and lost the battle of Neerwinden on the 18th March. The latter general then entered upon an understanding with the Austrian Colonel Mack for a cessation of hostilities, agreeing to evacuate Belgium and to give up all the fortresses that had already fallen to the French. He was hopeful that his troops would follow him in a march on Paris for the purpose of overturning the Convention and the Jacobin Club, proclaiming the monarchical constitution of 1791, and placing the little orphan Dauphin on the throne. The commissioners of the Convention, including Beurnonville, Minister of War, who had been sent to depose Dumouriez from his command, were arrested and handed over to the Austrians. With all

THE ADVANCE GUARD OF THE ARMY OF THE MOSELLE OFFER TO THE INHABITANTS THE BLESSINGS OF FRENCH LIBERTY AND EQUALITY

(From a hand-coloured engraving of 1793 in the Hennin Collection. Given by special permission of the French Government)

his scheming, the plans of the victor of Jemappes came to nought; he fled to England in the following June, and died at Turville Park, Henley-on-Thames, in 1823.

The disasters in the Netherlands had a marked effect on political affairs in Paris. There was mutual recrimination regarding the part played by Dumouriez, and while enemies were being made by the Girondists and the Mountain in the Convention, while Danton was being assailed by the former, and Robespierre was doing his best to discredit the accusers, foes within and foes without were imperilling the Republic. A royalist reaction was taking place in Brittany, Anjou, and Poitou, and more particularly in La Vendée, partly on account of the departments being called upon to levy their proportion of the 300,000 men called out by a decree of February 1793, and partly as a protest against the persecution of their beloved priests; disorderly scenes were becoming all too frequent in Paris; the dismemberment of France was being discussed by the allies. Danton, no longer occupying the Ministry of Justice, had already been on two missions to the armies in Belgium, and brought home a harassing story of the ill condition of affairs and the discontent of Dumouriez. He saw the necessity for more stringent methods both at home and abroad, and begged for further additions to the armies. When Carrier, urged on by the appeal of some of the sections for a drastic method of dealing with disturbers of the public peace, proposed the formation of a special court "to try and condemn without appeal all traitors, conspirators, and counter-revolutionists," Danton flung himself into the breach. He supported the motion with even more than his habitual energy and eloquence. He won the day, despite the opposition of the Girondists, and particularly of Vergniaud, whose wonderful black eyes

pierced the future and discerned in the new tribunal "an inquisition that would be a thousand times more redoubtable than that of Venice." Danton himself bitterly repented of the evil he brought about by this revolutionary weapon, not so much because he was one of its victims, but because of its excesses. "My object," he muttered in his cell as he awaited the guillotine, "was not that it should be the scourge of humanity, but that it should prevent a renewal of the September massacres." Yet it must not be overlooked that when Danton pleaded for this *Tribunal Extraordinaire* that was to become the dreaded Revolutionary Tribunal of to-morrow, he said in plain and unmistakable language, "Let us be terrible, to spare the people being so!"

Five judges and a jury of twelve men were elected by the Convention, and it was intended that the jury-men should be chosen from lists compiled by various departments. Prisoners were not to be brought before the court without the sanction of a special committee of half a dozen deputies. Fouquier-Tinville, a wealthy lawyer who had been a procurator, who had lost a considerable fortune and importuned the good-hearted Camille Desmoulins to give him a post, thereby securing the position of Public Prosecutor of the short-lived criminal tribunal of 1792, fulfilled similar duties in this new organisation. He was soon to dominate it, and to leave as his monument a name now held up to universal execration. M. Lenôtre, in his valuable book on the Revolutionary Tribunal,[1] says that "Fouquier did his work with stubborn zeal and a success which would have led one to imagine that he had talent and skill had not his task been greatly facilitated by the jury's docility. All the indictments which he drew up are vulgar and de-

[1] *The Tribunal of the Terror* (London, 1909), a book based on original research.

clamatory, and are manifestly the hasty work of a man of mediocre intelligence; they are merely rough drafts, without a semblance of eloquence or argumentation—mere strings of invectives poured haphazard on the heads of the accused. It is true, however, that the

FOUQUIER-TINVILLE ON TRIAL AT THE REVOLUTIONARY TRIBUNAL

(From a sketch made during the sitting by Gabriel)

brutality of the law and the vulgarity of his audience called for nothing better, and that to have insisted on more delicate quibbles would have been wasting time. On the other hand, he displayed constant activity. The whole of his time was absorbed by *his* tribunal. . . ."

Of more importance than this great engine of destruction, but chronologically later, because it was instituted after the disaster of Neerwinden, was the formation of

the secret Committee of Public Safety, whose members, subsequently increased, were delegated by the Convention with practically unlimited powers. It was proposed by Isnard, a Girondist, and supported by Danton, who followed up his plea by suggesting that, as prices were constantly rising, there should be a maximum price for bread and a *levée en masse* in addition to the 300,000 men who had been called for in the previous February. Those who composed the committee were Barère, Bréard, Cambon, Danton, Delmas, Lacroix, Lindet, Morvaux, and Treilhard. It was Danton who dominated the whole, as the committee was eventually to rule the Convention. To all intents and purposes, it was the executive power, and not the ministers; it dealt with the vital matter of national defence; it sent commissioners to the various armies to report on them and to watch the doings of the commanders; it was granted money for secret ends. The Committee of Inquiry, instituted in July 1789 for the purpose of convicting suspects, took on a new lease of life, with added powers, as the Committee of General Security. Within a few months its members were appointed by the Committee of Public Safety.

The acute phase of the giant struggle between the Girondists and the Mountain now began. The former again attacked Marat, sent him to the Tribunal, and were staggered when they heard that he had been acquitted. It was a victory for the Parisians, who almost worshipped him. The Jacobins and the Commune, feeling confident that now was the time to strike against their common enemy, began to make preparations for action. Guadet proposed to defeat them by urging the Convention to abolish the municipality and to move the Assembly to Bourges, a strong measure frustrated by Barère's motion that a committee of twelve be

Photo Bouchetal

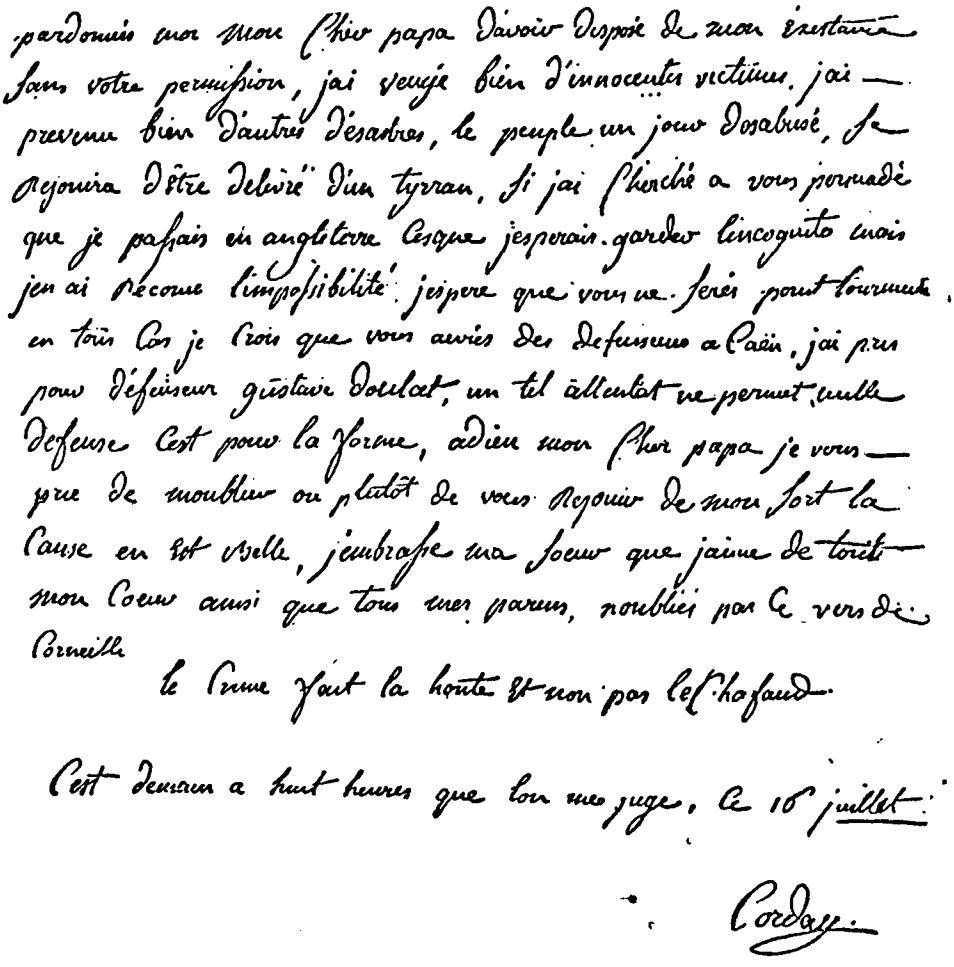
JEAN PAUL MARAT (1743–1793)

The most "living" portrait of the "Ami du Peuple," a painting in the Carnavalet Museum.

appointed to report upon the safety of the Convention, now removed to the Tuileries. One of the first acts of the twelve, who were for the most part Girondists, was to order the arrest of two more favourites of the mob, one of whom was Hébert, the editor of *Père Duchesne*. The sections, with a few exceptions, retaliated by demanding the arrest of the principal Girondists, and the motley gathering in the galleries showed its partiality for the Jacobins by frequently interrupting the deputies of the Right when they ascended the tribune. The strength of the Girondists was in the provinces. In the capital they could count on nobody, and there was only the semblance of unity amongst themselves. On the 2nd June a deputation from the Commune repeated the demand of the sections, and in addition asked for the arrest of the twelve. The building was surrounded by an angry mob, and, seeing no way out of the difficulty, the Convention consented. With one or two exceptions, the men who had aroused such bitter enmity were placed under surveillance in their own homes. Madame Roland, the prime mover of the Girondist activities, was arrested. Those who escaped hastened to the royalist centres of the west and north. Rennes, Caen, Bordeaux, Lyons, and Toulon in particular offered a sturdy resistance to the Jacobins; La Vendée and Deux Sèvres were already in rebellion.

Vergniaud once told Robespierre that the latter had sought to consummate the Revolution by terror, but that he should have wished to consummate it by love. This ideal was now shattered by the hard facts which the "representatives of virtue and duty" had to face. With bitter irony, the co-operation of the Girondists and the Royalists at Caen not only failed, but inspired the beautiful Charlotte Corday to leave her home and to strike

literally at the heart of Marat, whom she considered to be the cause of all the misfortunes which had befallen the Girondists. To her mind, deeply tinged with the mysticism which her grave gray eyes betrayed, this man


pardonnés moi mon Cher papa d'avoir disposé de mon existence
sans votre permission, j'ai vengé bien d'innocentes victimes. j'ai
prevenu bien d'autres désastres, le peuple un jour désabusé, se
réjouira d'être delivré d'un tyran, si j'ai cherché a vous persuadé
que je passais en angleterre c'est que j'esperais garder l'incognito mais
j'en ai reconnu l'impossibilité. j'espere que vous ne serés point tourmenté
en tout Cas je crois que vous aurés des défenseurs a Caën, j'ai pris
pour défenseur gustave Doulcet, un tel attentat ne permet aucune
defense C'est pour la forme, adieu mon Cher papa je vous
prie de m'oublier ou plutôt de vous réjouir de mon sort la
Cause en est belle, j'embrasse ma Soeur que j'aime de tout
mon Coeur ainsi que tous mes parens, n'oubliés pas ce vers de
Corneille

le Crime fait la honte et non pas l'échafaud

C'est demain a huit heures que l'on me juge, ce 16 juillet

Corday.

THE LAST LETTER OF CHARLOTTE CORDAY TO HER FATHER

was the bloodthirsty fiend that Napoleon became to the children of England at a later season. The talk concerning a march on Paris inspired her with the idea of setting out for the city and interviewing Marat for her own

special and peculiar purpose. When she arrived she wrote to him. "Citizen," she said, "I have just arrived from Caen. Your love for your native place doubtless makes you wish to learn the events which have occurred in that part of the Republic. I shall call at your residence in about an hour. Be so good as to receive me and give me a brief interview. I will place in your hands important information that will enable you to render great service to France." She wrote again, and a third time, but being unable to obtain what she wanted, she called and secured admission. Marat was reclining in a covered bath, trying to obtain relief from a painful skin disease. She told him of Girondist plots, and received the assurance that the men concerned in them should be guillotined in the next few days. Then she stabbed him.

When she was questioned by Fouquier-Tinville before the Revolutionary Tribunal, Charlotte Corday answered that she had killed one man to save a hundred thousand, that Marat being dead would perhaps warn the remainder. This was borne out in her last letter to her father, which runs as follows:

"Forgive me, my dear Papa, for having disposed of my existence without your permission, but I have avenged many innocent victims, and prevented many new disasters. Some day, when the people are disabused of their errors, they will rejoice that they are delivered from a tyrant. When I tried to make you believe that I was going to England, it was because I wished to remain unknown, but I soon saw that this would be impossible. I hope you will not be worried; in any case, I think you will find defenders in Caen. I have chosen Gustave Doulcet for my counsel, but a deed of this kind admits of no defence; it is a matter of form. Good-bye, my

dear Papa; I beg you to forget me, or rather to rejoice at my fate; it is in a good cause. I embrace my sister, whom I love with all my heart, also all my relatives. Do not forget this verse of Corneille:

"'The shame lies in the crime, not in the scaffold.'

"I am to be judged to-morrow at eight o'clock.

"CORDAY.

"*The 16 July.*"

On the 17th July "the Jeanne d'Arc of the Revolution" placed her head, with its beautiful chestnut hair, beneath the knife. Charlotte Corday—or, to give her name in full, Marie Anne Charlotte Corday d'Armand—had accomplished her personal mission at a terrible cost to her party. "She destroys us," exclaimed Vergniaud, "but she teaches us how to die." The political significance of the Girondists was ended; Marat became a god; the Convention bowed to the Mountain.

It was now that the Jacobins rushed through a new constitution, of merely passing interest by reason of the fact that it was never used, and served no more practical purpose than the one which had been prepared by the Girondists. There is this difference, however, that the former was accepted by the Convention.

Its salient points are that Parliament was to be elected annually, there were to be twenty-four ministers chosen by the legislature, and all laws were to be submitted to the primary assemblies before they were finally passed. The five deputies of the Convention who had been given places in the Committee of Public Safety for the purpose of drawing up the constitution of 1793 were Couthon, Saint-Just, Hérault de Séchelles, Mathieu, and Ramel—all members of the Mountain. On the 10th July the second Committee of Public Safety was elected, the

MARIE ANNE CHARLOTTE CORDAY D'ARMAND (1768–1793)

(From a portrait by an unknown painter at Versailles)

members being Barère, Jean Bon de Saint-André, Saint-Just, Gasparin (shortly succeeded by Robespierre), Hérault de Séchelles, Thuriot (who resigned his seat in September), Lindet, Couthon, and Prieur de la Marne. Danton, it will be noted, found no part in the successor of the machine he had helped to construct. The Revolution was progressing too fast even for him.

Meanwhile Normandy, Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux, and many other places struggled against the Government of Paris. Toulon had shown its royalist sympathies so far as to call in the assistance of the enemy and to admit the English and Spanish fleets, commanded by Hood and Langara respectively.

The troops they had brought with them commanded the city. The peasants of La Vendée, under such leaders as Cathelineau, Bonchamps, Stofflet, Lescure, and La Rochejacquelein, continued their warfare, and the allies began to display energy, although it was not concerted. Condé surrendered, Valenciennes and Mainz fell, Dunkirk was besieged. Had the coalition agreed on a common policy, and not been animated by thoughts of annexations and exchanges, France could have been speedily subdued. In this matter the Republic to a certain extent was at an advantage. On the suggestion of the Committee of Public Safety, the supreme executive power, the Convention decreed that all males between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five should hold themselves ready for military service. With the need for a skilful organiser came the man in the person of Lazare Carnot, who had joined the committee a few days before. Its executive was also strengthened by Prieur-Duvernois, Billaud-Varenne, and Collot d'Herbois.

"Liberty," said Barère, speaking on behalf of the Committee of Public Safety, "has become the creditor of every

citizen; some owe her their industry, others their fortune, these their counsel, those their arms; all owe her their blood. Accordingly, all the French, of every age and of either sex, are summoned by their country to defend liberty. . . . Let each maintain his post in the national and military movement about to take place. The young men will fight; the married men will forge arms, transport the baggage and artillery, and prepare provisions; the women will make tents and clothes for the soldiers, and exercise their hospitable care in the asylums of the wounded; children will make lint from old linen, and the aged, resuming the mission they discharged among the ancients, shall cause themselves to be carried to public places, where they shall excite the courage of the young warriors and propagate the doctrine of hatred to kings and the unity of the Republic. National buildings shall be converted into barracks, public squares into workshops; the cellars will serve for the manufacture of saltpetre; all saddle horses shall be placed in requisition for the cavalry; all draught horses for the artillery; fowling-pieces, pistols, swords, and pikes belonging to individuals shall be used in the service of the interior. The Republic being but a large city in a state of necessity, France must be converted into a vast camp."

Obviously the all-important task for the nation was to hurl back its enemies by the creation of efficient armies, but this carried with it the grave possibility of a military dictatorship. It was Carnot, "the organiser of victory," and his colleagues who, if they did not actually lay the foundations of the First Empire, supplied some of the human cement with which the structure was bound together.

CHAPTER XXX

THE REIGN OF TERROR

"*Liberty must triumph at any cost.*"—SAINT-JUST.

THE desperate and chaotic situation of France in the autumn of 1793 is the only excuse that can be offered with any show of reason for the revolting period of the Revolution known as the Reign of Terror. The absolutism of kings was succeeded by the absolutism of a democratic oligarchy and the tyranny of the few. It extended from September 1793 to July 1794, although it is obvious that chronologically the period is not easy to define within strict limits of time. Terror became the order of the day when, on the 17th of the aforementioned month, the Convention placed in the hands of the Revolutionary Committees a two-edged sword known as the "law of suspects," which practically meant that any person who was not a whole-hearted adherent of the advanced propaganda was liable to arrest at any moment of the day or night. This weapon was forged by Chaumette, a member of the Commune.

In Paris every man and woman had to carry a card giving particulars of his or her life, and as those who gave information were held in esteem by the various revolutionary committees, a rough and ready detective system was established. There were spies at almost every street corner and in the places of amusement and of common resort.

Three little groups of two men carried on some of the chief administrative work of the Committee of Public

Safety. Carnot and Prieur-Duvernois looked after all that had to do with the army and the war; Prieur de la Marne and Robert Lindet concerned themselves with the Interior; Billaud-Varennes and Collot-d'Herbois managed everything connected with the organisation of the government in the departments. Of the remainder, Saint-André dealt with the navy, Saint-Just and Couthon were the orators, Barère the reporter to the Committee, Robespierre was the thinker, Hérault de Séchelles was the dilettante. The Ministers were entirely subservient to them.

Like the Committee of Public Safety, that of General Security consisted of a dozen deputies. Its special work was to maintain the civil peace of the country. The Committee was, so to speak, the Scotland Yard of France and of Paris, but it had far greater powers than our own Police Department has ever possessed. It controlled the police throughout the land, the prisons of Paris came under its jurisdiction, the revolutionary committees were bound to send particulars of all suspects arrested by them, and it was the clearing-house of the Revolutionary Tribunal, sending it prisoners for trial and executing those who were found guilty. In the provinces, revolutionary tribunals were established at Arras, Cambray, Brest, Rochefort, and Toulouse. There were also twelve revolutionary commissions, sixty military commissions, and the ordinary criminal tribunals.[1] "Deputies on mission," nominated by the Committee of Public Safety, were also sent to inquire into various concerns connected with the different armies, to arrange diplomatic matters, to secure soldiers, to appoint courts for the trial of prisoners, and so on. Their scope of operations was

[1] See *A History of the French Revolution*, by Prof. H. Morse Stephens, vol. ii. pp. 411–412. The able chapters on the Terror and its organisation are of special value to the student, and the present writer acknowledges his indebtedness to them.

A Revolutionary Committee under the Reign of Terror, 1793–1794

(*Engraved after the drawing by Fragonard*)

wide, their powers all but unlimited. They were the heralds of the Terror outside of Paris, and they were supreme over all local authorities. When the Revolutionary Government was established these latter were reorganised, and in some 21,000 communes twelve men acting on behalf of the Convention enjoyed the power of being able to arrest and imprison all who raised a voice against the new dispensation. The *procureurs-syndics* gave place to National Agents, usually appointed by the deputies on mission. In the Capital a rough and ready army of *sans culottes*, complete with artillery, acted under the orders of the Paris Commune and the revolutionary committees of the sections.

On the 10th October Saint-Just reported to the Convention that the condition of the country was going from bad to worse. Disorder and pillage reigned in the armies; the law of the maximum had been set at defiance and famine was threatened; the value of *assignats* had decreased to an alarming extent, and "the government was a hierarchy of errors and crimes." He counselled the deputies to put an end to all mild measures in their dealings with "the enemies of the new order of things." On his motion the government was declared to be revolutionary until peace was restored, and everything connected with administration passed into the hands of the Committee of Public Safety, which was to report to the Convention—now entirely legislative—every month. The centralisation of power so conspicuous in the reign of Louis XIV was again evident.[1]

The Terror was not the mere pastime of a set of savages, although the cruel atrocities perpetrated in some parts almost compel us to believe that a set of homicidal maniacs had been let loose. It was, shall we say, martial

[1] See *ante*, p. 9.

law exaggerated; an attempt to standardise patriotism as it was understood by the Jacobins in order to make France at unity with herself. How could she hope to resist foreign foes when some of her own cities were in rebellion?

The Committee of Public Safety and of General Security, the Revolutionary Tribunal and the Paris Commune are to-day scarcely more than phantoms, but the guillotine remains a very tangible thing. A great deal of misconception exists about this instrument of summary justice. Legend has it that the machine was invented by the doctor whose name it bears, and that he was one of its victims. The truth of the matter is that Dr Joseph Ignace Guillotin was a kindly-dispositioned physician of undoubted ability. Far from being a believer in violent methods, his revolutionary tendencies did not carry him much further than to propose the meeting of the Third Estate in the Tennis Court. He was commissioned by the National Assembly to inquire into the existing criminal law, and it was when he gave his report that he made the suggestion that instead of criminals being put to death by burning alive, breaking on the wheel, hanging, or severing the head with a sword, a painless method should be introduced for plebeian and aristocrat alike. This was on the 1st December 1789. Nearly eleven months later Dr. Antoine Louis, a Paris surgeon, was requested to ascertain particulars of any invention that carried out Dr. Guillotin's humanitarian idea. With the assistance of Roederer he made the acquaintance of Tobias Schmidt, a German by birth and a piano-maker by trade, who submitted a design probably based on somewhat similar machines used at various times in England, Ireland, and Italy, and of which mention is made in a contemporary

Antoine Louise Leon de St. Just (1767–1794)

(*From a portrait in the Musée Carnavalet*)

account of an execution at Toulouse in the first half of the seventeenth century. The invention was adopted, and became known as the "louisette." Its trial trip was made in the courtyard of Bicêtre on the 17th April 1792, the subject of the experiment being a corpse. Its first actual victim was the highwayman Pelletier, who underwent the death penalty eight days later. Unfortunately for Dr. Guillotin, scribe and caricaturist had already got to work, and the "widow" soon received the appellation of "guillotine." When his brief public career came to an end, Dr. Guillotin again devoted himself to medicine, but, says a friend, he "could never console himself for what he called the involuntary blot on his career. His venerable features wore an expression of great sadness, his hair had been bleached by anxiety. In endeavouring to mitigate the suffering of humanity, he felt he had unwillingly been the means of destroying many lives." He lived until the 26th May 1814. Tobias Schmidt proved his ability in other directions by making a fortune, but beyond this little is known of him. The significance of his invention lies in the fact that between the 8th and the 27th July 1794 over 600 persons passed under the blade of the instrument in Paris alone.[1]

To suppress the revolt of the cities was of paramount importance. Lyons in particular offered a very stubborn resistance to the Convention. The strife had already begun owing to the influence of the local Jacobin Club, whose leading light had become mayor, but it was exaggerated by the successive deputies on mission who visited the place and did their best to quash all Girondist

[1] A guillotine was offered for sale in Paris in December 1909. It stood nearly eleven feet high, and the supporting beams were surmounted by carved Phrygian caps painted red. This particular instrument, which formed part of the collection of the late M. Forgerin, was used during the Reign of Terror at Feurs (Loire).

influence and sympathy. The Hôtel de Ville was attacked by the National Guard and an army was formed to resist the troops that were sent to subdue the city. After offering a gallant defence, Lyons was conquered in October 1793. The Convention visited it with summary vengeance, and although the decree that it should be annihilated and the place where it had stood renamed Freedville was never carried out, Collot d'Herbois, Joseph Fouché, and Sébastien de La Porte, who were sent by the Committee of Public Safety, were directly or indirectly responsible for nearly 2000 deaths.

Bordeaux, after steadfastly refusing to recognise several deputies on mission, finally surrendered in the middle of October, almost three months later than Marseilles. The latter had been entered by Carteaux following the evacuation of Avignon by the Marseillais, who had gone hither on their way to join forces with Lyons preparatory to a march on Paris. Amongst those who had encamped about the walls of the old city, which had fallen to Charles Martel a thousand years before, was Napoleon Bonaparte. He had been placed in command of a battery, but was shortly afterwards ordered to assist in the protection of the rear. The contribution of Marseilles to the victims of the Terror was some 400 persons, about 100 more than at Bordeaux.

Many of the Girondists who were fortunate enough to escape from Marseilles found a temporary resting-place at Toulon. Carteaux and Doppet both failed to take the great southern arsenal, and it was not until the veteran Dugommier took charge of the military operations that any real progress was made. The death of a captain of artillery gave Napoleon his golden opportunity, and it was mainly due to the efforts of the youthful *chef de bataillon* that the city was recaptured on the 17th

Photo Bouchetal

THE LAST PORTRAIT OF MARIE ANTOINETTE

(*From the painting by Prieur made in the Conciergerie a few days before her execution. Now in the Carnavalet Museum. Prieur was a juror in the Revolutionary Tribunal and a friend of Fouquier Tinville*)

Photo Giraudon

THE SIEGE OF TOULON BY THE ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC IN 1793

(The figure at the right is supposed to represent Napoleon. From the original water-colour drawing made by Grégoire at Toulon at the time of the siege and now in the Hennin Collection at the Bibliothèque Nationale)

December. Although the English, Spanish, Piedmontese, and Neapolitan forces were unable to secure a foothold in France by holding Toulon, Lord Hood was able to save 14,000 of the inhabitants by means of the British fleet. In addition, Captain Sidney Smith with a little band of sailors set fire to a dozen French ships in the harbour, and the Spaniards exploded two powder-ships. The Republican troops pillaged the city, and about 1800 individuals were condemned to the guillotine or shot. "Among those who distinguished themselves most," reported Dugommier, "and who most aided me to rally the troops and push them forward, are citizens Buona Parte, commanding the artillery, Arena and Cervoni, Adjutants-General."

The Vendéan rebellion, which broke out in March and flickered on until the battle of Cholet, fought on the 17th of the following October, leaving embers that were rekindled in 1794, was marked by deeds of savagery on either side. Three armies and the garrison of Mainz were sent into the affected departments, and although the peasants and their aristocratic colleagues won a number of battles, the troops of the Convention, inspirited by Rewbell and Merlin de Thionville, the deputies on mission, succeeded in scattering the devotees of civil war. Many villages were set on fire and their inhabitants slain, while at Nantes Carrier, the representative of the Committee of Public Safety, exercised his authority with such relentless purpose that probably 2000 people were guillotined, flung into the Loire, or shot.

Meanwhile Carnot had been organising the armies of the Republic, which soon numbered thirteen, with a total of 750,000 men. The English and Hanoverian troops besieging Dunkirk, so famous in British and French story, were compelled to vacate it in September, and

the Duke of York retreated with the loss of his artillery. Houchard, who was in command although Jourdan had contributed more to the successful issue of the operations, was recalled and guillotined for treason and for failing to follow up the victory. Carnot had given the unfortunate general his position, but to fail was to forfeit his favour, and he now promoted Jourdan. The soldier-draper proved the reliance placed in him by defeating the Austrians at Wattignies on the 16th October, compelling them to raise the siege of the important fortress of Maubeuge and to retreat on Belgium. Three days earlier, Austrian and Prussian troops had won an important success at Weissenburg. This was amply retrieved by the subsequent campaign carried on in Alsace with splendid energy by Hoche and Pichegru, ably seconded by Saint-Just and Le Bas, who as deputies on mission quickly brought the revolutionary methods of Paris to bear on affairs. By the end of December 1793 the French were in complete possession of Alsace, and the only foes within her borders were Frenchmen who refused to recognise the authority of the Convention and its Committees.

It was a wonderful achievement, especially as many of the victories were due in no small measure to officers of newly-raised battalions originally chosen from the ranks by those who now served under them. All sorts and conditions of men proved that they were able to command armies. If an artist like Carteaux, and Doppet, a retired doctor, had been unsuccessful at Toulon before the coming of Dugommier, and the goldsmith Rossignol had failed in La Vendée, the citizen-soldiers were soon able to point to such men as Moreau, by profession a lawyer, and Murat, who in the days of the *ancien régime* had enlisted in the royal cavalry and been dismissed for

insubordination. Jourdan had served as a private in the American War, but on his return he had discarded the sword for a pedlar's pack and the knapsack for a little drapery shop. Pichegru had also fought against England across the Atlantic, to be afterwards chosen as their commander by the citizen-soldiers of a battalion raised at Besançon in 1792. Further instances of rapid promotion could be cited were they necessary, for the wars of the Revolution proved a fine testing-ground of a man's abilities. To fail, unless it was followed up by a victory of some consequence, was to make the acquaintance of the "National Razor," as the guillotine was called by those who sought to temper tragedy with grim humour. Among those who forfeited the confidence of the Committee of Public Safety in 1793 and were afterwards executed were Lückner, Custine, Eisenberg, Biron, Brunet, and Beauharnais, the last-mentioned leaving a young and charming widow who was to become the Empress Josephine. Napoleon once said that in war all that is useful is legitimate, and that the most important quality in a general is firmness, which "is a gift from Heaven." Had Carnot been given to uttering military maxims he would have avowed similar principles, for he most certainly put them into practice. He also believed that in the rough and ready state of the revolutionary armies the soundest wisdom was to concentrate great masses of troops and crush the enemy by sheer weight of numbers whenever possible.

The "organiser of victory" slaving in the Pavillon de l'Égalité of the Tuileries and putting as much energy into his work as he exacted from those who carried out his instructions, was no whit busier than the Revolutionary Tribunal sitting in the old Palais de Justice.

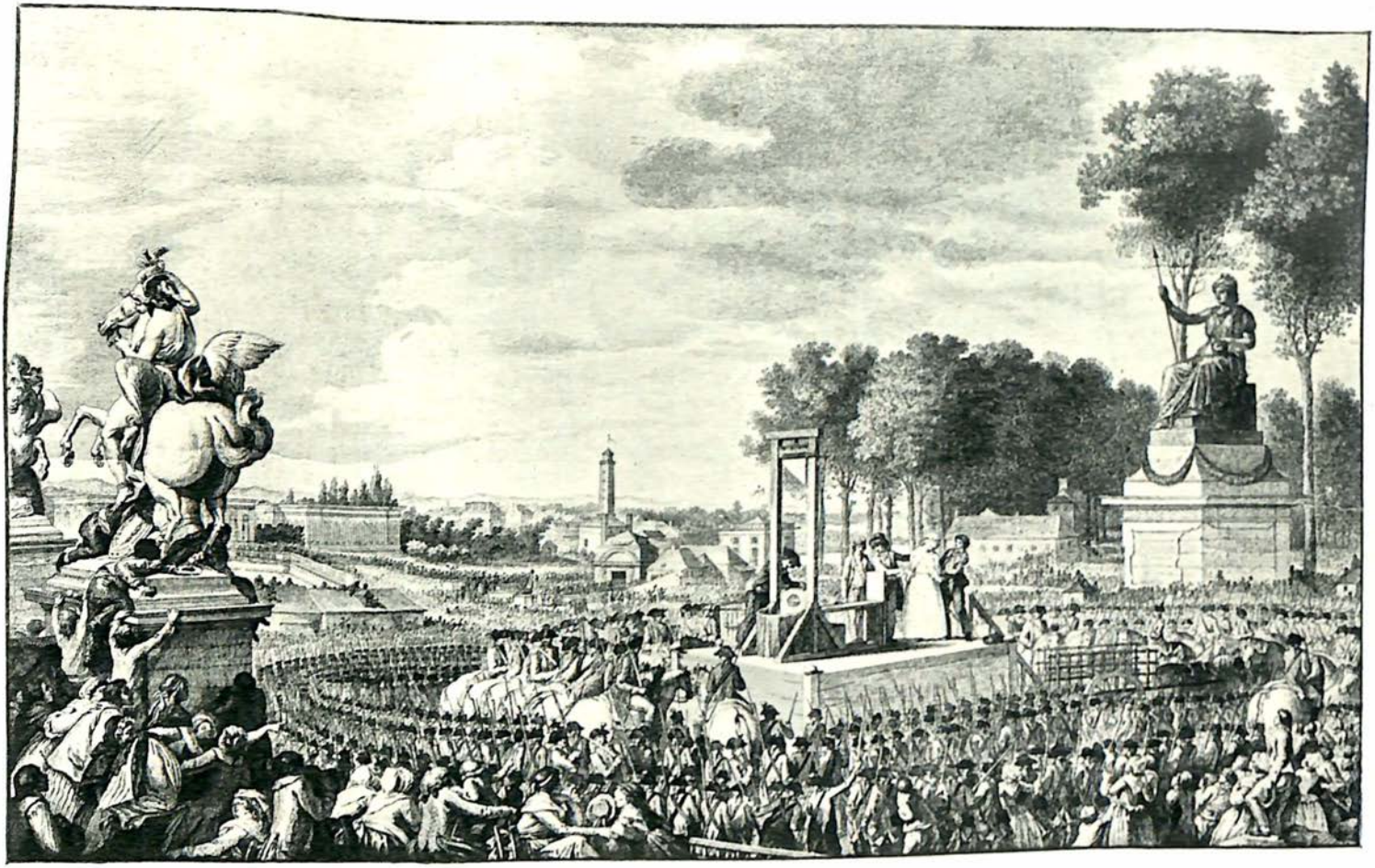
The case of "the ex-Queen," as Fouquier-Tinville

called Marie Antoinette, demanded attention, even though it was a foregone conclusion that she would be found guilty. The examination of the once beautiful woman, her hair white, her attitude dejected, her eyes half-blind, began on the 12th October; on the 16th she died on the

MARIE ANTOINETTE IN THE TUMBRIL

(From the sketch made from life by David)

scaffold. "I had time," says the Vicomte Charles Desfosses, "to observe the details of the Queen's appearance and of her dress. She wore a white skirt with a black petticoat under it, a kind of white dressing-jacket, some narrow silk ribbon tied at the wrists, a plain white muslin fichu, and a cap with a bit of black ribbon on it. Her hair was quite white, and was cut short round her cap; her face was pale, but there was a touch of red upon



THE EXECUTION OF MARIE ANTOINETTE, OCTOBER 16, 1793

(Engraved by Helman after Monnet. From a print in the Hennin Collection)

the cheek-bones; her eyes were bloodshot, and the lashes motionless and stiff." David, the celebrated painter, saw the tumbril as it passed, and made a hasty sketch of the Widow Capet. Who can recognise in the accompanying reproduction the vivacious woman whose daring ways had made all Paris gossip before the days of the States-General?

A little over a fortnight later, the guillotine claimed twenty-one of the most prominent Girondists, including several who had been ordered to be kept under surveillance by the Convention on the 2nd June.[1] These victims included Brissot, Gensonné, Vergniaud, Fauchet, and Lasource. "I die at a time when the people have lost their senses," said the last-mentioned in his address to the Revolutionary Tribunal; "you will die when they recover them." Dufriche-Valazé stabbed himself when sentence of death was pronounced, but the remainder went almost gaily to the guillotine singing the *Marseillaise*. Over three score of the Girondists who sat in the Convention and had protested against the arrest of their colleagues were also arrested. Of the remaining members who have been mentioned in these pages, Pétion, Buzot, Roland, and Condorcet committed suicide; Barbaroux also tried to kill himself, but failing to do so, was eventually discovered and executed at Bordeaux. Louvet, Lanjuinais, and Larévellière-Lépeaux were amongst those who escaped. Before the end of the year those who bowed their heads to the knife included Madame Roland, Philippe Égalité (formerly Duke of Orleans), Bailly, Duport du Tertre, Barnave, and Madame du Barry. One wonders if the mistress of Louis XV remembered how she once showed a portrait of Charles I of England to her royal lover with the

[1] See *ante*, p. 417.

remark, "Thus, too, will they treat you, Sire, if you let the long-robes have their way"?

There is no real cause for wonder that ere long there were dissensions in the powerful Jacobin minority which now dominated France. Danton, apparently of opinion that harsh measures had fulfilled their purpose, most emphatically believed that the Terror should be brought to a speedy end by a policy of conciliation. "I would rather be guillotined than guillotine," he remarked to his friend Panis, and when he was told that the only alternative was to fly he quietly answered, "One does not take one's country with one on the soles of one's boots." Of those who showed their belief in Danton's plea for moderation Camille Desmoulins, ardent republican though he continued to be, was the most conspicuous. His witty *Vieux Cordelier* attacked the Hébertists, the party of the Commune and the Paris mob, pleaded for a Committee of Mercy to "complete the Revolution, for clemency itself is a revolutionary measure, the most efficient of all when it is wisely dealt out," and secured for the editor his expulsion from the Jacobin Club. Hébert and his satellites Chaumette and Anacharsis Clootz, the most advanced of advanced radicals, found no real support in Robespierre, whose good graces were not to be despised. As yet he had concealed his disgust, but the "Incorruptible" hated atheism and vulgarity, and the Hébertists represented both. They broke open the tombs of the kings at St. Denis, and tore from their coffins the bones of those who had once been all-powerful in France. Church plate was brought to the hall of the deputies, steeples were ordered to be torn down, and in Notre Dame the "divinity of Reason" usurped the Divinity of Christ. Chaumette went so far as to introduce a demirep to the Convention as the Goddess of the

Photo Giraudon

THE ARREST OF ROBESPIERRE AND HIS PARTISANS, THE 9TH THERMIDOR

(*From the original drawing by Prieur* (*the design for the engraving*) *now in the Louvre*)

new cult. After being invited to take a seat beside the president, she was conducted by an immense crowd to the great cathedral and installed on the high altar. Robespierre happened to be present when the girl entered the hall in which the representatives of the nation were gathered. He quietly vacated his seat, and those who knew him understood the significance of the action.

It was evident that if the Hébertists and the Dantonists were allowed to carry on their propaganda the position of the Committee of Public Safety would be jeopardised. The *Vieux Cordelier* was selling by scores of thousands, and the opinions of the "Indulgents," as Danton's party was called, were sinking into the minds of men and women and causing them to ponder. For a short period Robespierre and Danton were allies, and together they crushed the chiefs of the Commune. On the 15th March 1794 Hébert, Chaumette, and Clootz were guillotined. The Committee of Public Safety then turned its attention to the "Indulgents" who, in failing to accept the doctrine of the Terror and endeavouring to stem the tide of violence, were also regarded as its enemies. The heads of Danton and Desmoulins, together with those of other members of the reactionary group, fell into the basket early in April.

Robespierre, supported by the crippled Couthon and the handsome Saint-Just, maintained his supremacy for a matter of four months. Another step towards absolute control was taken when the Convention decreed that henceforth the Ministry was to be carried on by twelve Commissions controlled by the Committee of Public Safety. Yet this suggestion was made by Carnot and not by Robespierre, who relied more on the support of the Convention and the populace than the Committee.

As an antidote to the obscenities of the Feast of

Reason he persuaded the deputies to decree that the nation recognised God and the immortality of the soul, and acknowledged that the worship worthy of the Supreme Being was the practice of the duties of man. In all probability Robespierre was perfectly honest in this matter. It was a move both clever and foolish. Clever because by far the greater proportion of the nation had some kind of superstitious belief in the possibility of the existence of a God; foolish because many of the men of the Convention, reading between the lines, discerned words and sentences written in sympathetic ink which the fires of their enmity showed up as references to political reaction. God was Somebody intimately connected with the *ancien régime.*

To Robespierre there was nothing ridiculous about the Festival of the Deity held in the Champ de Mars in June. It received the imprimatur of the Convention and of the "Incorruptible," who as President walked a few yards ahead of the procession, bearing in his hands corn, fruit and flowers. He was arrayed in white breeches, a blue coat, a tricolour sash, and waving plumes. "Never had the sun shone with brighter radiance," says one who watched the procession; "never was a more joyous and enthusiastic concourse of spectators assembled. Robespierre himself was astonished with the immense crowd of people who filled the gardens of the Tuileries. Hope and gaiety beamed from every countenance; the smiling looks and elegant costumes of the women diffused a universal enchantment. As he marched along . . . the air resounded with cries of '*Vive Robespierre!*' and his countenance was radiant with joyfulness . . . 'See how they applaud him!' said his colleagues. 'He would become a god; he is no longer the High Priest of the Supreme Being.'"

THE DEVIL AND THE JACOBIN

The Devil having brooded over the ruins of a splendid empire (France) congratulates himself on his "lay." "A fig for your efforts," says his infernal better half; "see my Jacobin." The Devil remains stupefied.

(*From a German aquatint* (1793) *in the Département des Estampes at the Bibliothèque Nationale*)

Of course this man, the will-o'-the-wisp of the Terror, was absolutely devoid of humour, as fanatics usually are, for the sense of the ridiculous tends to make one a philosopher and a conservative. "To-morrow," he said, "we will renew our struggle against vice and against tyrants." Man was to be re-created in Robespierre's image by the putting to death of all those who barred the way, or were believed to bar the way, to a complete reorganisation of Society. Already it had been decreed that prisoners charged with conspiracy and treason were to be tried in Paris. This significant step was followed by the terrible law of the 22nd Prairial. It was proposed by Couthon but had been worked out by the "Incorruptible." "If that law is passed," said Ruamps, "one had as well blow out one's brains." From henceforth those who were arrested were tried in batches without the privilege of counsel. A great feeder of the guillotine this! In less than two months it disposed of some 1400 persons. Some historians[1] believe that Robespierre was merely wishful to bring the Reign of Terror to a rapid conclusion, and then "to appear as a kind of saviour of France."[2] It is possible but not proven.

In July, perhaps in June, because he did not attend the meetings of the Convention—"gangrened by corruption"—with his usual regularity, Robespierre recognised that his popularity was waning and that he had made dangerous enemies. Although the *Mémoires* of Barras have to be read with great caution, the writer asserts that the Committees of Public Safety and General Security endeavoured to coalesce with Robespierre for the purpose

[1] In particular Mr. Hilaire Belloc. See *Robespierre: a study* (London, 1901), p. 313.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 313.

of destroying the Convention. "Robespierre," he says, "thinking himself stronger than all parties, refused the alliance offered to him. It was then seen that a diversion was necessary, and that the Committees must unite with the National Convention in assailing Robespierre, Couthon, and Saint-Just."

On the 26th July (8th Thermidor) 1794 Robespierre mounted the tribune and made an impolitic oration which certainly gives some credence to the views of Barras and brought the speaker within measurable distance of the guillotine. It was a veiled attack upon certain members of the Committees. He mentioned no names, preferring to fire from an ambush, and he endeavoured to secure the support of the deputies by metaphorically patting them on the back. "Representatives of the People," he cried in his nervous way, "it is time to resume the pride and elevation of character which befits you. You are not made to be ruled, but to rule the depositaries of your wisdom." Robespierre maintained that a criminal coalition with accomplices in the great Committee intrigued in the heart of the Convention and sought to ruin both patriots and country. The traitors should be punished, the Committee of General Security and of the Public Safety be purified. "Constitute the unity of the government," he urged, "under the supreme authority of the Convention; crush every faction under the weight of national authority, and establish on their ruins the power of justice and liberty."

The speech was ill received by the deputies. Some trembled for their own skins; others saw in it a further attempt on the part of the orator to get the government into his own hands. It was applauded to the echo when Robespierre read it for a second time in the Jacobin Club, upon whose support and that of the Commune he now

chiefly relied. The enemies of Robespierre and of the country were declared to be identical.

On the following day Billaud-Varennes told the Convention that a plot for assassinating its members had been hatched in the Jacobin Club. Tallien said that he had seen the army of this "new Cromwell" preparing for action, and supported the attack. A deputy attempted to defend Robespierre but failed, like the "Incorruptible" himself, to secure a hearing. "Down with the tyrant!" coupled with demands for his arrest, came from all parts of the hall. Augustin Robespierre cried that he was as guilty as his brother: "I share his virtues, and I will share his fate." Le Bas, another supporter, threw in his lot with them. The Convention then unanimously voted the arrest of Maximilien and Augustin Robespierre, Le Bas, Couthon, and Saint-Just. They were taken to different prisons.

The Commune and the Jacobin Club now got to work. The tocsin was sounded from the steeples, the armed sections began to display activity, but there was little enthusiasm and no bold stroke. Robespierre, loosely guarded at the Luxembourg, was rescued, as were other of his friends, and persuaded to place himself under the protection of the Hôtel de Ville. Here, while he was arguing with his colleagues instead of doing, the Convention had decided on action. The Commune was outlawed; Hanriot, the commander of the armed force, was arrested and his post taken by the deputy Barras, who with Bourdon de l'Oise and Merlin de Thionville marched towards the Hôtel de Ville the while Legendre shut up the Jacobin Club. At last the troops of the Convention arrived in the Place de Grève, fronting the Hôtel. Those who were looking in the direction of the first-floor windows saw a man fling himself out; those whose eyes happened

to be centred upon the steps saw the body of Augustin Robespierre heaped upon them. Then two pistol-shots were heard, one that of a suicide, Le Bas, the other that of —one is not quite certain. Some say that Robespierre attempted to kill himself, others that a youth of the name of Merda, aiming at Couthon, struck the "Incorruptible" and fractured his jaw. It is one of the many mysteries of the Revolution. We know he was taken to the Tuileries, to the antechamber of the Committee which had both feared and despised him, that his injuries were bandaged, that with a box to support his aching head and Saint-Just as companion he passed long hours listening to the brutal remarks of the guards. A little while later Robespierre was removed to the Conciergerie, and then he and his confederates were brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal, whose summary method of dispensing justice was his own creation. In thirty minutes twenty-two prisoners who had helped to make the Terror were condemned to death, including the "Incorruptible" and Dumas, the President of the Tribunal. They perished on the evening of the 28th July, while the afterglow of the setting sun still lingered in the sky.

The period that immediately followed was known as *la queue de Robespierre*—Robespierre's tail. On the following day, the 29th July, seventy persons intimately or remotely connected with the Commune were condemned, on the 30th a dozen more, a little later Coffinhal, the senior judge, passed under the knife. As the year proceeded, Carrier, responsible for the Terror at Nantes, was guillotined, and on the 7th May 1795 Fouquier-Tinville perished on the Place de Grève, declaring just before he entered the tumbril that he died "for his country" and that his innocence would be recognised.

With the passing of its creator the iniquitous law of

Prairial was abolished and the Revolutionary Tribunal partly reconstructed. Its clemency was certainly more conspicuous and marked the general reaction. From August to November 1794, a period of four months, 942 prisoners were tried, but only 46 received the death sentence.[1] "This proportion," says M. Lenôtre, "shows the measure of the responsibility which rested on Robespierre's tribunal." Hundreds of "suspects" were released. Various changes were also made in the Committee of Public Safety, to which Bréard, Eschassériaux, Laloi, Tallien, Thuriot, and Treilhard were appointed, four of the vacancies thus filled being caused by death and two because the members were "on mission." Collot d'Herbois and Billaud-Varennes, entirely out of sympathy with the peaceful trend of affairs, retired. The committee now concerned itself with military and diplomatic measures, while its kindred organisation of General Security dealt with the internal affairs of France. Both were far more dependent on the Convention than formerly. Hitherto the sections had met daily at a fixed remuneration. Payment for services rendered was abolished and the meetings limited to one every *decade*. The enfeebled Jacobins lost the use of their seditious Club and the Commune was a thing of the past. By these measures the Convention gradually restored to itself the power it had lost. The Girondist deputies, excluded from the Convention since the 3rd October 1793 on account of their protest against the *coup d'état* of the 2nd June, when the leading members of their party had been proscribed,[2] were allowed to come back, and sixty-three of them did so in March 1795. The decrees against the priests and the emigrant nobles were repealed; the law

[1] See *The Tribunal of the Terror*, by G. Lenôtre (London, 1909), p. 233.

[2] See *ante*, pp. 417, 433.

of the maximum was abandoned; religious toleration was openly avowed, and an attempt was made to restore to the right quarters the confiscated property of persons who had been guillotined.

These wise measures did nothing towards the recovery of the real value of the *assignats*, nor did they prevent occasional riots from breaking out. Goaded into insurrection by the appalling scarcity of food, which was gradually reduced by the special committee charged with this work until the dole for each person was only a few ounces a day, the starving people marched towards the Tuileries on the 20th March 1795. At that time Billaud-Varennes, Collot-d'Herbois, Barère and Vadier were under arrest, and the occasion was given a political significance because the release of these Jacobin "patriots" and the Constitution of 1793 were demanded in addition to bread by some of the most violent sections of the Faubourgs St. Antoine and St. Marceau. The anti-Jacobin sections, however, rendered useful service on this occasion, as did the *Jeunesse Dorée*, a kind of irregular militia composed of the young *bourgeois* of the capital, which owed its existence in a large measure to Fréron, the editor of *L'Orateur du Peuple*. As many of the young fellows had suffered the loss of some near relation during the Terror, they assumed a collarless coat called the *costume à la victime*. Short, heavy sticks loaded with lead were their weapons, and very efficient they often proved to be. On the 1st April the populace was again agitated, and overpowering the guard, entered the hall of the Convention. Seventeen members of the Mountain showed that they were in favour of the insurgents and were arrested, while the "patriots" on whose behalf the mob had besieged the Tuileries were subsequently transported to Cayenne. The mob was again dispersed by the re-

GRND CONVOI FUNEBRE DE LEURS MAJESTES LES JACOBINS EN LEUR VIVANT.
DES SEIGNEURS ET MAITRES DÉCÉDÉE EN LEURS PALAIS DE LA RUE ST. HONORÉ

A Satire against the Jacobins issued immediately after their Fall

A finely-coloured aquatint in the Bibliothèque Nationale of the funeral procession of "Their Majesties the Jacobins, late our Lords and Masters, deceased in their Palace of the Rue St. Honoré." Condorcet and Brissot are riding reversed on asses; 7 is a deputation from the Cordeliers Club followed by a string of abbés. Next comes the corpse, behind which are Petion, Robespierre, Dubois, and Roederer as sanguinary harlequins.

actionary sections, to issue forth on the 20th May in a still more threatening mood. Men and women rushed into the galleries of the Convention. These were cleared after considerable agitation and the place closed. Shortly afterwards there was a noise of hammering, the doors were burst open, and the hall was again invaded. Led by a deputy, the guard endeavoured to defend the legislators, but in the struggle that ensued one of the members, mistaken for Fréron of the *Jeunesse Dorée*, was killed and his head stuck on a pike in the old familiar way. With splendid courage Boissy d'Anglas, who was then in the President's chair, defied those who sought to intimidate the Assembly, telling them that their demands would neither alter the measures before the Convention nor expedite the arrival of provisions. By this time many of the deputies had taken to their heels, leaving a section of the Mountain in possession. It decreed the re-establishment of the Jacobin Club, the constitution of '93, the reinstatement of the imprisoned deputies, and the appointment of an executive commission. On the arrival of further battalions, the building was relieved of its unwelcome visitors, the decrees were cancelled, and deputies who had favoured the mob arrested. On the following day the army of insurrection again assumed a threatening attitude and placed its cannon ready to attack the château. It was dispersed by a few vague promises, but it was not until the Faubourg St. Antoine was disarmed by regular troops and the National Guard, and the reorganisation of the latter by eliminating from its ranks members of the lower orders, that the peaceful citizens of Paris could sleep in their beds without fear of being awakened by the ringing of the tocsin.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE "WHIFF OF GRAPESHOT"

"Absolute equality is a chimera; virtue, talent, physical and intellectual powers are not equally distributed by nature." BOISSY D'ANGLAS.

WITH the opening of the campaign of 1794 it was evident that the lack of common interests with the allies was all on the side of France. Prussia and Austria were virtually enemies owing to the Polish question, and the payment of a subsidy for the provision of 60,000 Prussians alone precluded King Frederick William from withdrawing from the field. When a revolt against the Russian garrison at Warsaw occurred in April the Prussian monarch at once entered Poland, leaving the troops engaged in the war against France on the Upper Rhine, whereas England's great object in securing their services had been to defend Belgium, which task was now left to the Austrian and British forces. The Emperor himself travelled to Brussels, but his endeavours to arouse some kind of enthusiasm in his soldiers before they marched "on Paris" did not prevent them from losing the battle of Tourcoing, fought on a Sunday (May 18th), like so many important actions have been. The following month is memorable in naval annals by reason of the battle of "the glorious first of June," when Lord Howe defeated the French fleet off Ushant. On land Ypres and Charleroi fell to the French, and when the Austrians were within an ace of relieving the latter city, they were defeated at Fleurus and compelled to retire. Brussels

was entered by the Republicans on the 10th July. Jourdan, pursuing the Austrians, forced them beyond the Rhine, and his army occupied the left bank of that river. In Holland the troops under Pichegru and Macdonald virtually gained possession before the end of the year. Following the battle of Saorgio on the 28th April, the Piedmontese were driven across the Alps. Farther south, the Army of the Pyrenees, unsuccessful at first, rid the country of Spanish invaders and entered the peninsula by Catalonia and Bastan. On the other hand, several of the French possessions in the West Indies fell to Great Britain, as well as the settlements in India.

The dark wintry days of January 1795 found Pichegru at Amsterdam and in possession of the Dutch navy. The conquest of Holland would not have been so easy had the inhabitants resisted the French, but as the party which opposed the house of Orange gave a hearty welcome to the Republican troops, the Stadholder sought safety in flight, and found refuge in England. The States-General of Holland proclaimed the sovereignty of the people, the country the Batavian Republic, and entered into an alliance with France. Tuscany made peace in February. Prussia, badly hipped in the partition of Poland following the defeat of the revolt of Kosciusko, and receiving but small compensation compared to Russia and Austria, withdrew from the war. By the Treaty of Basel, signed in April, France secured Clèves and Obergeldern and restored her captures, and agreed that if she secured the left bank of the Rhine on the conclusion of a general peace, she would see that Prussia was duly compensated on the opposite bank. The northern States of the Empire, in which Prussia was particularly interested, were to be regarded as neutrals. Spain also came to terms with the Revolutionists by ceding the Spanish portion

of San Domingo. Sweden, Switzerland, and Denmark followed.

The Triple Alliance between Great Britain, Prussia, and Holland was shattered, and England and Austria were left to carry on the war. Pitt and the Austrian statesman Thugut, who hated Prussia with as much vehemence as the aristocracy of Vienna hated him, then brought about an offensive and defensive treaty between the two Powers, which was concluded on the 4th May 1795. The immediate results were not encouraging, for although Pichegru evacuated Mannheim, and raised the siege of Mainz—not without grave suspicions of treason on his part—England's support of a rising in Brittany was a colossal failure. This abortive plan took place during the horrible atrocities in the south known as the "White Terror," in which the royalists sought to rival the Jacobins in bloodshed and fury. The expedition, manned by *émigrés* and fitted out at great cost, was landed in Quiberon Bay in June, and some 1500 Chouans[1] immediately joined it. The attempt was timely, because civil war had again broken out in La Vendée and Normandy, and would doubtless have assumed even more alarming proportions than it did had a less capable general than Hoche been given command of the troops sent to suppress it. The little army of nobles, priests, peasants, and Chouans secured Fort Penthièvre, and held out until the night of the 20th July, when the stronghold was captured. A frantic effort on the part of the commander to arouse his forces stationed on the peninsula only made them the more anxious to evacuate the place. Panic-stricken men,

[1] The nickname given to one of their leaders. For the most part, the Chouans were men who were at war with the Revolution by reason of their royalist sympathies. Some were military deserters, others returned emigrants, with the usual mob of malcontents.

Photo Bonaventure

LAZARE HOCHE (1768–1797)

(*From a painting in the Carnavalet Museum*)

THE DAUPHIN, LOUIS XVII (1785–1795(?))

(After the portrait by Kucharski made in 1792)

Photo Neurdein

women, and children made their way to the beach, overcrowded the boats, and lost their lives in the heavy swell of the bay. Although Hoche showed himself on the side of mercy regarding the fugitives, Tallien, as commissioner, carried out the decree of the Convention that *émigré* nobles should be put to death. When he was informed that a promise had been made that they should be treated as prisoners of war, his reply was, "What legal bond can exist between us and rebels, if it be not that of vengeance and death?" Over 700 of the poor wretches were shot in a field near Auray.

Not quite three weeks before the Quiberon expedition sighted the shores of Brittany, the deputies of the Convention were informed of the alarming condition of the little lad whose interests were so closely bound up in the success of "that vile assemblage of ruffians sustained by Pitt." On the 8th June 1795 it was announced that the Dauphin was dead. Since then more than a thousand volumes have been written in an attempt to prove or disprove this single incident of the Revolution, and French magazines never seem to tire of discussing the subject. Comte d'Andigné certainly found the remains of a child in the Temple moat in June 1801, but there was no real proof that they were those of Louis XVII of France. Whether he escaped and earned a meagre living in Holland as a mender of clocks and watches under the name of Naundorff, or was one of the two dozen pretenders who made their appearance, is now scarcely more than of academic interest. It is, in any case, one of the most pathetic instances in history of the innocent suffering for the guilty.

Like its predecessors, the Convention had been charged to draw up a constitution for the Republic. A committee appointed to revise the effort in this direction which had

been planned by the Mountain in 1793 and abandoned, now announced that it had completed its task. While the constitution of the year III, decreed by the Convention on the 22nd September 1795, gave scope for a considerable amount of liberty, it also tended towards centralisation and the ascendancy of the middle class.

Experience had proved that a single legislative body was apt to be far too hasty in its decisions and liable to be swayed by political clubs and the populace. It was therefore abandoned, and gave place to two chambers, the Council of Ancients and the Council of Five Hundred. The former was to consist of 250 married men or widowers of at least forty years of age, who were to approve or reject the laws proposed by the lower House, in which no one who was not thirty years old was allowed to occupy a seat. Five Directors, chosen by the Ancients from names proposed by the Five Hundred, formed the executive, and the ministers were responsible to them. One of the Directors was to retire every year, and in a similar manner one-third of the members of the councils were to resign or seek re-election annually. In this way public opinion had an opportunity of making itself felt, and the Assembly would not be subjected to the violent changes which had marked the Convention. The first Directors were Barras, Carnot, Larévellière-Lépeaux, Letourneur, and Rewbell. The "organiser of victory" was chosen in the place of Siéyès, who declined the honour. Once more we find that a vote was only granted to citizens who paid taxes, with the proviso that they must have lived for twelve months in one place. Even then they did not vote direct for candidates, but for electors. It is not difficult to recognise in the Directory, charged as it was with the direction of diplomacy and of war, the Committee of Public Safety toned down to suit

the more moderate requirements of the day. It had neither power to dissolve the Assembly, nor could its members be dismissed by the legislative body. Its meetings were held in secret, it had a special guard, and the Luxembourg was granted for its use. Fearing the results of reaction, the Convention decided that two-thirds of its existing members should be elected to the Councils, thus ensuring a majority of Jacobins, and consequently limiting those deputies who had royalist tendencies. The Directory was made up entirely of Conventionalists who had voted for the death of Louis.

This decree brought matters to a crisis, and Paris to another display of violence. Food was still at famine prices, the monarchical party felt that it had been duped, and determined to resist; citizens who were anxious for a happy issue out of the afflictions of the past few years whispered that the Reign of Terror was likely to return, and the standing army of malcontents saw yet another opportunity for indulging in disorder. The Convention, deprived of the support of these various parties, also lost the services of the National Guards of the capital, between 30,000 and 40,000 of whom pledged themselves to resist the odious "Law of the Two-thirds." The troops it could depend upon were 5000 of the Army of the Interior, assisted by perhaps 2000 Invalides and gendarmes. Of the dozen generals in Paris at the time, there was not one whose loyalty was beyond suspicion. Carnot, Tallien, and Barras finally decided that Napoleon Bonaparte was likely to prove the most reliable man, although Barras was the nominal Commander-in-chief. Thus while the people were shouting "Down with the two-thirds!" and the sections were making their arrangements, these four men were preparing for the defence of the Tuileries. Those who scoff at Napoleon's belief in

his "star" should ponder the significant fact that in the previous month his name had been struck from the list of general officers because he had refused to join the Army of the West, then busy in La Vendée.

"Barras," says Marmont in his *Mémoires*, "did himself justice, and was aware of his incapacity; but in times of danger men sometimes have flashes of inspiration, and see who can save them. Bonaparte, since the siege of Toulon, had left in the minds of all who had seen him at work a deep conviction of his force of character and great ability. Barras remembered Bonaparte, invited him to become his second in command—that is, placed himself under his lieutenant's orders. Bonaparte was overjoyed; he had found an opportunity; in a few hours excellent dispositions were made." This is a far more accurate statement of affairs than that given by Barras, who states that Bonaparte "performed no functions but those of an aide-de-camp of mine."

Napoleon's first act was to secure artillery. For this purpose Murat was sent under cover of night with a body of cavalry to the camp of Sablons, five miles away. The insurgents also attempted to obtain the guns, but, as they had no horses, were outdistanced. When the cannon were secured, he placed them at points of vantage which would enable him to command the thoroughfares leading to the Tuileries. It was not until late in the afternoon of the 5th October that the forces of the sections received instructions from General Danican, their commander, to begin the attack. They made a stand at the barricaded church of St. Roch, but scarcely had they shouldered their muskets than Bonaparte opened fire from his guns and hurled destruction into their irregular ranks. Although they had no artillery, they frequently rallied until they were compelled to enter the church or seek refuge

A Public Audience of the Directory, 1795

(From a coloured engraving in the Bibliotheque Nationale. Drawn "after nature" by Chataignier)

in the streets and alleys of the Rue St. Honoré. The activity of Napoleon, says Thiébault, "was astonishing; he seemed to be everywhere at once; he surprised people by his laconic, clear, and prompt orders; everybody was struck by the vigour of his arrangements, and passed from admiration to confidence, and from confidence to enthusiasm." When forces from the opposite bank of the Seine succeeded in crossing the bridges, they received a fiery welcome, and in less than three hours the little Corsican soldier had saved the Convention. His immediate reward was an appointment to the Army of the Interior as second in command, followed a few days later by the chief command. With a clemency which augured well for the future, two only of the rebel leaders suffered for the part they had played in the insurrection of the 13th Vendémiaire. This moderation, coupled with corruption and inefficiency, was to mark the course of the new Government.

Pasquier attributes the failure of the royalists and constitutionalists to the want of a leader, and he speaks with authority because he had gone to Paris "imbued, like so many others, with the conviction that a strong hand was directing the movement." He found "nothing but a crowd animated by the best and most courageous intentions, together with a number of prattlers in the tribunes of the sections." He adds that "it is hard to say what must cause the most astonishment—the blindness, the carelessness, or the incapacity which allowed so good an opportunity to escape. At five o'clock in the evening, the opportunity had slipped past. A few cannon-shots fired against the steps of Saint Roch had been sufficient to settle the question."

The Convention must not be remembered solely for the despotism it created by means of the two Committees

and the Revolutionary Tribunal. It showed itself not altogether unmindful of the things that pertain to peace by introducing the metric system, planning a scheme of public education, founding a number of institutions connected with science, letters, and the arts, and formulating in their initial stages the celebrated Codes which Napoleon completed.

It is significant that almost the last act of the Convention was an endeavour to extinguish all thoughts of the guillotine and its tragedies from the minds of the citizens of Paris. It decreed that the Place de la Révolution should be known as the Place de la Concorde.

"The Whiff of Grapeshot," 13th Vendémiaire (October 5, 1795), Church of St. Roch, Rue St. Honoré

(*Engraved by Helman after Monnet*)

CHAPTER XXXII

THE COMING OF NAPOLEON

"What have you done with this France which I left so brilliant? I left you peace; I find war. I left you victories; I find defeats. I left you the millions of Italy; I find laws of spoilation and misery."

NAPOLEON, *18th Brumaire*, 1799.

IN a little room in the Luxembourg provided with plenty of cobwebs, a worn-out table, and a few uncomfortable chairs, the Directory began its work. Rewbell made himself responsible for the supervision of all that concerned justice, finance, and foreign affairs; Barras, having proved useful on such occasions as Thermidor and Vendémiaire, was given the department of police. Larévellière-Lépeaux, the patron of Theophilanthropy, a deistic cult which brought to Napoleon's lips the rebuke, "Oh, don't talk to me of a religion which only takes me from this life without telling me whence I come or whither I go!" had assigned to him such interests as education, religion, and manufactures. Letourneur, once an officer in the engineers, represented the colonies and the navy, while Carnot continued the work in which he had been so conspicuously successful.

These men, none of whom had more than a suspicion of genius save Carnot and Rewbell, found themselves saddled with exceedingly difficult tasks. At first we find Carnot and Letourneur, both moderate republicans, working and voting together, just as Larévellière-Lépeaux, Barras, and Rewbell usually co-operated, but very soon the inevitable rivalry between the two great

departments of government began, to the accompaniment of strife within the Directory. Financially the country was going from bad to worse. *Assignats* had been poured from the printing-presses, and had depreciated to such an alarming extent that an attempt was made to redeem them by *mandats territoriaux*, which could be exchanged for land without delay. The plan ended in complete disaster. The war, of course, did not foster commerce while the frontiers were being defended, but Bonaparte speedily proved that when it was offensive there were plenty of opportunities for exacting money from conquered countries by means of indemnities and plunder. He also made war self-supporting, an idea which rendered him independent of supplies from France, although it had one great disadvantage in that it was likely to alienate the sympathies of the people in the lands devastated by his troops. In replenishing the Treasury, Bonaparte was helping to make himself indispensable to the Directory and to France, and his contributions were sufficient evidence of the value of a large army when employed on active service.

The democrats and the Royalists gave a great deal of trouble. They were the sworn enemies of the Legislature. The hope of the democrats was to establish a reign of "common happiness," an abstract proposition having as its basis the elimination of the private ownership of land by means of the decrees of a democratic Convention. A successful attack on the Directory and the Councils was therefore the first necessity. In this they were forestalled. It was the Directory which opened war on them by closing their club at the Panthéon, where Babeuf daily incited his followers to rise. This was followed on the 10th May 1796 by the arrest of some of the conspirators and the seizure of documents detailing

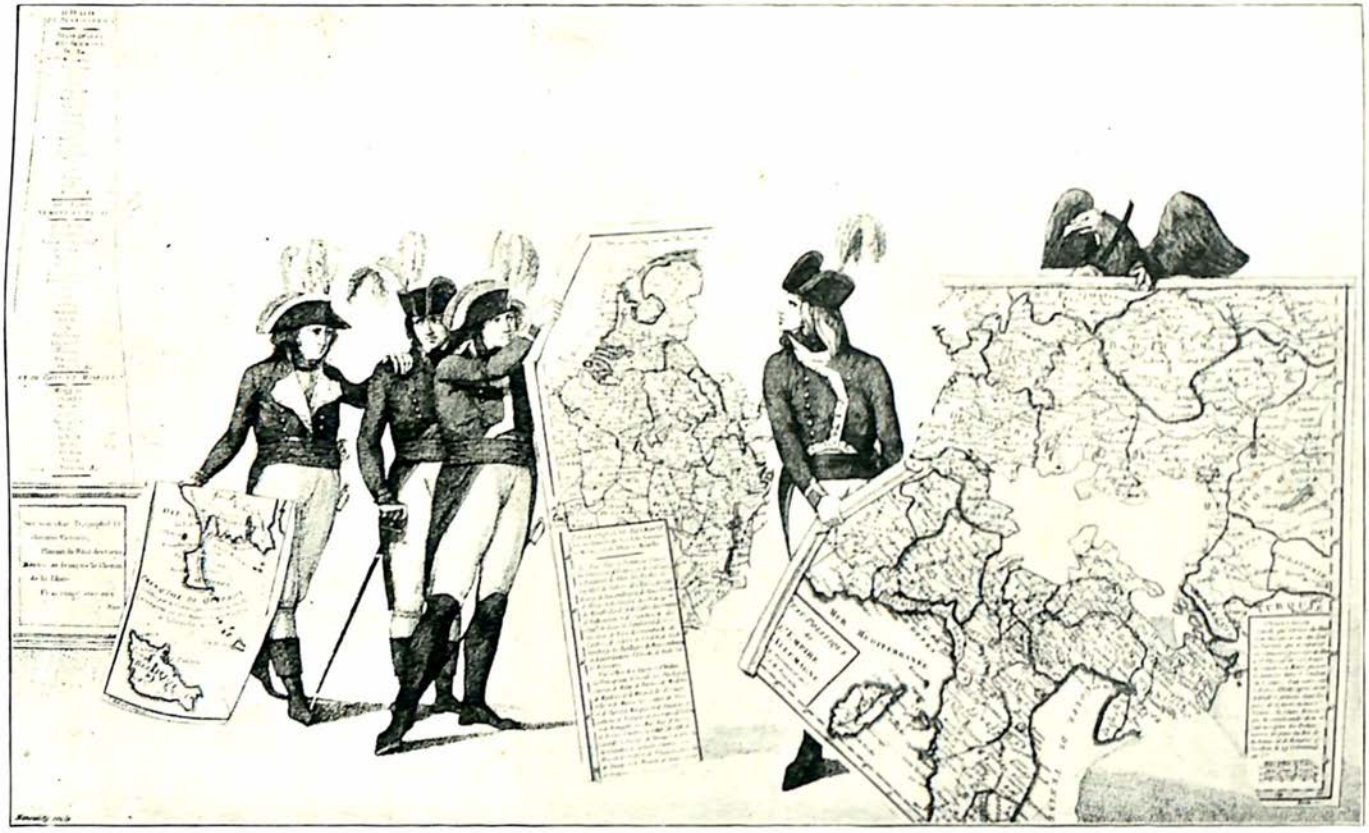
the coming *coup d'état*. Such summary methods did not prevent the faction from marching to the camp of Grenelle with the object of securing the assistance of the battalions of the Army of the Interior which were stationed there. These men, the ringleaders had reason to believe, would join them in the attack owing to the influence of a Captain Grisel, a member of the club. In this they were grossly deceived. The troops were aroused, many of the conspirators were killed in the fight that ensued, and over fifty of the democrats who were taken prisoners were sentenced to death, transportation, or imprisonment. On hearing his sentence Babeuf stabbed himself. Amongst those who escaped was Drouet, the hero of the flight to Varennes.

The Royalists had not lost all heart at Vendémiaire. They also had a plot, which they carried out with comic-opera seriousness. Believing that the summary dismissal of Babeuf and his followers at the camp of Grenelle was a sure indication that the troops were well disposed towards the party of opposite opinions, they duly presented themselves to the commander. He promptly handed them over to the military commissioners, who, probably enjoying the humorous side of the situation, sentenced them to short terms of imprisonment.

We must now briefly review the military situation. In the west Hoche was slowly bringing the long-drawn-out Vendean war to a close by concessions and gunpowder, inducing the unattached inhabitants to surrender their firearms and tracking down the armed bands. By the middle of 1796 he had finally established order. The campaign in Germany had come to a standstill, for Pichegru's defection had seriously compromised Jourdan's army and exposed the frontier of the Rhine to the Austrians. In the south the Army of Italy

had been struggling for two years on the Maritime Alps against the Austrians and the Piedmontese, endeavouring to gain a sure foothold in Northern Italy. The veteran Schérer, who had stigmatised the defender of the Convention as too ambitious and intriguing, had invaded Piedmont, but after the battle of Loano little progress had been made. Bonaparte had already submitted a plan of campaign that he felt confident would lift this force from the Slough of Despond into which it had fallen, and it was mainly to this memorandum and Carnot's influence that he now secured the chief command. The task committed to Napoleon, Jourdan, and Moreau, who had succeeded Pichegru, was to crush the remaining members of the Coalition and finally to co-operate in a combined attack on Vienna.

When Bonaparte arrived at Nice, the headquarters of the 40,000 undisciplined troops, many of whom were reduced to such a poverty-stricken condition that they had no boots, he immediately issued general orders announcing that he was about to lead them where they would find "honour, and fame, and wealth." Fortunately for the Republicans, the forces of the King of Sardinia and Piedmont, and of the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, outnumbering the French by some 12,000 men, were not united. "Separated," as Napoleon said, "they were lost." By sending troops in the direction of Genoa he deceived the Austrians under Argenteau, and defeated them with his main body at the battle of Montenotte on the 12th April 1796. A few days later disaster awaited the Piedmontese commanded by Colli, followed by the capture of Mondovi and Cherasco, whereupon the alliance between Sardinia and Austria came to an end, and Savoy and Nice were surrendered to France, together with three important fortresses.



THE TRIUMPH OF THE FRENCH ARMIES

An engraving of 1797 allegorising the triumphs of Fichegru and Moreau (his successor) and their "young heroes" all over Europe. The inscription continues: "Last year counted fourteen battles and sixty combats without a reverse; this year every step has been towards victory, and the arms of France have been carried where they have never penetrated before to the doors of Rome, giving peace to Italy, and to the doors of Vienna, giving it to all Europe."

(From an engraving by Monsaldy in the Bibliotheque Nationale)

Crossing the Po into Austrian Lombardy, Napoleon skilfully outmanœuvred the Imperialists and routed them at Fombio and Lodi, compelling them to retreat upon Mantua, the key to Austria and Italy. On the 15th May the general, feeling that he "might become a decisive factor in the political arena," made his triumphal entry into Milan. Acting according to the orders of the Directory, Lombardy was pillaged, priceless works of art were sent to Paris to arouse the enthusiasm of the multitude and as a proof of the amazing progress of French arms, and a levy of 20,000,000 *francs* was exacted. Having announced in a proclamation to the people of Italy that his army was making war "as generous foes," Napoleon now gave an example of how their property would be respected and revolutionary ideas propagated by sacking Pavia. Parma and Modena were granted peace at the cost of valuable pictures, supplies for the army, and a large sum of money, the former paying 2,000,000 *francs*, and the latter five times that sum. When the Duke of Modena neglected to meet all of Napoleon's demands, and added insult to injury by allowing Austrian soldiers to pass through his territory on the way to Mantua, the duchy became a French protectorate. It was found convenient to forget that a precedent had already been made by the Republican troops. While marching to besiege the same fortress, they had violated the neutral territory of Venice by their appearance at Brescia, the Austrians following their example by occupying Peschiera. Napoleon admitted that he had purposely picked a quarrel with Venice in case the Directory should require an indemnity. Soon the downfall of the once proud Republic was complete and ready to be bartered to Austria.

For a moment Napoleon turned his attention to the

Papal States. The occupation of Bologna resulted in an armistice, the payment of 15,500,000 *francs*, and the presentation of the usual collection of works of art. By the signature of the Treaty of Tolentino on the 19th February 1797, Avignon, Ferrara, Bologna, and the Romagna were ceded to France, and Pope Pius VI meekly agreed to forfeit 30,000,000 *francs*. Together with Austrian Lombardy and Modena, they formed the Cisalpine Republic in the final settlement of affairs. Leghorn was seized, notwithstanding that Tuscany had already made peace with France, and Genoa became the Ligurian Republic.

Meanwhile the siege of Mantua had been undertaken. Although "the little corporal" succeeded in defeating the two sections of the army marching to its relief, he was unable to prevent some of Würmser's forces from reaching the fortress, and he candidly confessed that he was placed in several exceedingly critical situations. After winning the hard-fought battles of Arcola, Rivoli, and La Favorita, he eventually secured the capitulation of Mantua on the 2nd February 1797.

Less romantic was the story detailed to the Directory by Moreau and Jourdan. At first Moreau had carried all before him, the Imperialists retreating as he advanced. Near Würzburg, however, the Archduke Charles met and defeated Jourdan, while a small Austrian force occupied Moreau's attention elsewhere. Jourdan, compelled to retreat across the Rhine, was superseded by Hoche; Moreau, deprived of his colleague's assistance, withdrew into Alsace. Napoleon, relieved of anxiety concerning Italy, and seeing in Hoche a possible rival, entered Austria and was everywhere victorious against the Archduke Charles. The campaign was ended by the Emperor suing for peace at Leoben, within easy distance of Vienna itself.

England, suffering by reason of her loss of commerce with the Continent, had in 1796 twice shown herself willing to enter into negotiations for a cessation of hostilities, but the restoration of Belgium to Austria, which was made an essential by Pitt, was regarded by the Directory as unworthy of serious discussion. A further fruitless attempt at peace was made in 1797, some months after the battle of Cape St. Vincent, when Jervis crippled the Spanish fleet before its concentration with the fleets of France and the Batavian Republic for the invasion of Ireland. By the signature of the Treaty of Campo Formio on the 17th of the following October, Great Britain, again victorious on the sea off Camperdown six days before, was deprived of the last of her allies. Belgium, the left bank of the Rhine, and the Ionian Isles were ceded to France. Austria recognised the independence of the Cisalpine Republic, acquired Venice and many of her provinces, and it was agreed that France should help her to obtain the Archbishopric of Salzburg. Various questions not requiring immediate settlement were to be discussed at a congress to be held later. This meeting took place at Rastatt in December, and did little more than cement the ill-feeling that already existed between Austria and Prussia.

The elections to the Councils in May 1797 showed that the swing of the pendulum had again brought the Royalists into favour. Barras, Rewbell, and Larévellière-Lépeaux still retained their positions as Directors and their opinions as Jacobins, but Letourneur, the retiring Director, gave place to a reactionary in Barthélemy, while Carnot, with whom he made common cause, was suspected of having leanings in the same direction. In the Councils the Royalists were in the majority, General Pichegru became President of the

Five Hundred, and the party had its organisation in the Club de Clichy. The policy of the Directory and everything connected with it was attacked. Voicing the opinions of many people, the Royalists clamoured loudly for peace and retrenchment. The policy of Bonaparte was criticised, and his high-handed method of conducting negotiations openly resented. The law which barred the relatives of those who had emigrated of all civil rights and condemned them almost to the positions of "ticket-of-leave men" was rescinded, and further measures of religious freedom were conceded. These two decrees brought back to France many *émigrés* and priests who were quite ready to play their parts in a counter-revolution.

As a conciliatory measure, some of the members of the royalist party proposed that four of the Ministers who held opinions contrary to the majority should be replaced by men in whom the Councils had confidence. Barras, Rewbell, and Larévellière-Lépeaux, however, acting in concert, removed the men who were in sympathy with the Royalists and appointed Jacobins in their stead. In this matter they had the support of the army, which had no desire to return to the days of aristocratic officers, and saw in the continuation of revolutionary methods full scope for ambition and opportunities for fortune. Hoche was appointed Minister of War, and ordered to bring 12,000 men to the neighbourhood of Paris ready for the coming *coup d'état* which was being planned by the Directory, but that measure was frustrated by a storm of opposition in the Councils on the ground that Hoche had not reached the legal age for holding such a position. The General resigned, and within a few months died.

Napoleon, still busy in the South, had already heard

THE FÊTE GIVEN TO BONAPARTE AFTER THE TREATY OF CAMPO FORMIO

(Engraved by Berthault after Girardet. From the Hennin Collection by permission of the French Government)

of a plot to place Louis XVIII on the throne, and when news reached him of the deadlock between the Directors and the Councils, the Man of Vendémiaire knew that it was time to act. "I see," he wrote, "that the Clichy Club means to march over my corpse to the destruction of the Republic." He sent Lavalette, one of his aides-de-camp, to investigate fully the condition of the contending parties, and, after receiving his report, hesitated no longer. He ordered Augereau and a body of troops to Paris to strike down the Royalists, not because he had any overweening love of the triumvirate in the Directory, but because he knew that their victory would ultimately secure his. Augereau, with a bundle of addresses from the army to the Directors urging them to put down Royalist conspiracies, made no secret of his mission. The party he had come to annihilate, unable to obtain active support, dispersed. Barthélemy was arrested, and Carnot fled to Switzerland. Their places were taken a little later by Merlin of Douai and François de Neufchâteau.

"On the night before the entrance of General Augereau into the Councils," says Madame de Staël, "the alarm was such that the greater number of persons of note left their houses from the fear of being arrested in them. One of my friends found an asylum for me in a small chamber which looked upon the bridge Louis XVI. I there spent the night in beholding the preparations for the awful scene which was to take place in a few hours; none but soldiers appeared in the streets; all the citizens remained in their homes. The cannon, which were brought to surround the palace where the legislative body assembled, were rolled along the pavements; but, excepting their noise, all was silence.

"In the morning it was known that General Augereau

had conducted his battalions into the Council of the Five Hundred, that he had arrested several of the deputies who were found there assembled in a committee, and that General Pichegru was president at the time. Astonishment was excited by the little respect which the soldiers showed for a general who had so often led them to victory; but he had been successfully characterised as a counter-revolutionist, a name which, when public opinion is free, exercises in France a kind of magical power. Besides, Pichegru had no means of producing an effect on the imagination; he was a man of good manners, but without striking expression either in his features or in his words; the recollection of his victories did not hover around him, for there was nothing in his appearance that announced them. . . ."

The excuse for the *coup d'état* of the 4th September (18th Fructidor) 1797 was the obvious one of a Royalist conspiracy. Over fifty deputies and forty journalists were condemned to transportation, the majority of whom effected their escape. The elections of forty-nine departments were annulled, the laws in favour of the priests were repealed, military tribunals were constituted for the special purpose of trying *émigrés*, liberty of the press was suspended, partial bankruptcy was declared, and something perilously approaching the Reign of Terror returned. Beyond the frontier the assassination of General Duphot at Rome afforded sufficient excuse for the formation of the Roman Republic in February 1798, and the invasion of Switzerland resulted in an increase of territory for France, an indemnity of over 20,000,000 *francs*, an offensive and defensive alliance, and the establishment of the Helvetic Republic.

When Napoleon made his appearance in Paris, he was received with tremendous enthusiasm by the populace;

but those whom he had saved were far more anxious to see him employed at a safe distance from the capital. He might get up to "mischief" if he were idle. Admitting that "the pear is not yet ripe," he became Commander-in-chief of the moribund Army of England, formed some time before for the invasion of the British Isles. However praiseworthy the plan might be, he speedily came to the conclusion that it was not practicable at the moment, and his thoughts turned, as they had often done in the stormy and depressing days of his youth, to the dazzling East. By seizing Malta, occupying Egypt, and invading India, he told Talleyrand, now Minister for Foreign Affairs, "we may change the face of the world." The Directors were only too glad of an excuse to get rid of him. On the 19th May 1798, his fleet weighed anchor from Toulon.

The same month witnessed the return to the Councils of many advanced democrats, who were stigmatised by the Directory as anarchists in the pay of the Royalist party. By means of a commission, many of the elections were quashed and other candidates took the places of the legally constituted deputies. This arrangement brought no peace, and there was constant friction between the Directory and the Councils. It is to this Parliament that France owes conscription, although at first the method was found to be far less satisfactory than had been expected.

Italy was still in a state of turmoil. The continued occupation of the Cisalpine Republic by a French army was a constant source of irritation to the inhabitants and led to the dissolution of the legislature and the foisting on the people of a new constitution. A revolt in Piedmont was taken advantage of to secure the principal fortresses and to occupy Turin; Naples was invaded by Championnet and became the Parthenopean Republic, the

Bourbon king and his queen, Marie Antoinette's sister, being taken to Palermo by Nelson after the Neapolitan army had achieved a temporary success; Lucca and Tuscany were overawed by French troops.

These aggressive measures helped to bring about another coalition against the Republic. The semi-crazy Czar Paul I announced his intention of giving to England something more than the moral support which had been vouchsafed by the Empress Catherine; Turkey, alarmed at the occupation of Egypt by Bonaparte, was content to lay aside her hatred of Russia and to make common cause against France; Austria, feeling that she had been cheated at Campo Formio and Rastatt, and viewing with dismay the spreading of French influence in Italy, threw in her lot with the others; Portugal, unsafe because Spain was an ally of France, also joined.

The upshot of this formidable confederation was that by the middle of August 1799 Jourdan had advanced into Germany and retreated towards the Rhine following his defeat at Stockach, in Swabia, and France had lost the whole of her Italian conquests with the exception of Genoa. The news of the disasters leading up to this state of affairs was relieved to some extent by more successful operations elsewhere; for in the following September an Anglo-Russian army, in attempting to invade Belgium, was defeated by Brune at Bergen, and in Switzerland Masséna administered a crushing blow to the Russians at Zürich. Shortly afterwards the Czar withdrew from the coalition.

Speaking of the period between the *coup d'état* of the 4th September 1797 and that of the 9th November 1799, when Napoleon seized the reins of government, the Duc de Broglie, in his *Souvenirs*, says, with justice: "We were plunging under full sail back to the abyss of the Terror,

without a gleam of consolation or of hope. The glory of our arms was tarnished, our conquests lost, our territory threatened with invasion. The *régime* of the Terror no longer appeared as an appalling but temporary paroxysm, conducting of necessity through a salutary reaction to a more settled order of things. The reaction had failed utterly, the Government, which owed to it its existence, was transporting its founders to perish at Sinamary. All the efforts made by honest statesmen to secure the legal enjoyment of their rights had been crushed by violence. There seemed to be nothing before us but to return to a bloodthirsty anarchy, the duration of which it was as impossible to foresee as it was to find any remedy."

France was internally in a very sluggish state: the popular imagination was no longer stirred by wonderful victories; the National Debt did nothing but mount up, and had now reached a matter of some 300,000,000 *francs;* corruption was rife at the Luxembourg; "brigands" infested half the departments, slackness was the characteristic of local justice and administration. People began to realise that yet another constitution had failed, that the Councils were quite helpless against the Directory and their *coups d'état*, that the tyranny of one which had obtained when France was a monarchy had now become the tyranny of five, and that the Committee of Public Safety, with all its arbitrary and sanguinary ways, had at least given victory to the country. The elections of 1799 again proved that the Jacobins were in the ascendant, although the retiring Director was succeeded by a moderate Republican in the Abbé Siéyès, political theorist and author of the pamphlet *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers État?* which had been in everybody's hands at the time of the meeting of the States-General. This time he did not

refuse to enter it, although some of his fellow Directors sought to prevent him from doing so because it was common knowledge that he held in contempt the constitution of 1795 and everything connected with it, including the august body which he had just joined. In conjunction with Barras and the Councils, he managed to secure the resignations of Larévellière-Lépeaux, Merlin, and Treilhard, who were not in keeping with his policy. In this the plot rebounded, for their places were filled by Gohier and Moulin, who were advanced Republicans and consequently sources of danger to the unanimity of the executive, and Roger Ducos. The last mentioned was alone a "safe man." Like Barras, he believed that the true secret of statesmanship lies in the exercise of the power of discretion which enables one to attach oneself to the winning side. Roger Ducos threw in his lot with Siéyès. Although Gohier had held the responsible position of Minister of Justice under the Convention, and Moulin had fought in the Vendéan war, the man of most conspicuous ability was outside the Directory. This was Bernadotte, Minister of War, who became a marshal of France and King of Sweden. At the moment he was a thorough-paced Jacobin, and it was not long before he was compelled to resign from a post he filled with distinction.

In the Councils the Jacobins rushed through the iniquitous law of hostages, which, by making the relatives of *émigrés* and aristocrats answerable for the sins of others, sought to put down rebellion in disturbed districts. An income tax was imposed and bitterly resented; a Jacobin Club was formed in the capital, which incited the mob to riots, and had therefore to be closed by Fouché, now Minister of Police. The country would have been declared in danger but for the

THE ABBÉ SIÉYÈS IN COSTUME AS A MEMBER OF THE DIRECTORY

(From a coloured engraving in the Hennin Collection, given by special permission of the French Government)

clever manipulation of the Five Hundred by Lucien Bonaparte.

The remedy of Siéyès for the disease of France was "a head and a sword." Possessing a head himself, his difficulty was to discover a weapon. He thought of Joubert, but death dismissed him from the ranks at Novi. Bernadotte, like Jourdan, was a Jacobin. Masséna was thought of and passed over; he lacked the indispensable "something" which commanded success. Moreau was unreliable. Bonaparte must be brought back at the sacrifice of Egypt. Even here there was uncertainty, but the Directors were willing to take the risk. It was improbable that he could get back in any way other than by help of the Turkish Government, because his fleet had been shattered by Nelson at the battle of the Nile. Accordingly negotiations were opened with the Porte. Egypt was not too big a price to pay for a man who would restore their power.

On the 9th October 1799, the inhabitants of St. Raphael, near Fréjus, saw two frigates approaching. They did not understand why they were thus favoured, nor did they comprehend that the destinies of France were to be changed by the men who had returned to the Fatherland after an absence of nearly fifteenth months. Some of the names were quite unfamiliar to them, some were recognised—Bonaparte, Murat, Berthier, Duroc, Marmont, Lannes. They were to know them all later, when the smoke of battle hung over Europe like a cloud and nearly every family in France had a son "at the war."

Siéyès and the Moderates welcomed "the sword," the Democrats hoped to find in Napoleon a leader, the

Republic felt that in him it had "the strong man." He lived very quietly, pondering the situation. Before leaving Egypt he had heard of French reverses beyond the frontier and of discontent within the borders. The pear was ripe, and that was why he had returned. Rightly discerning that the party of moderation was the most likely to prove acceptable to the nation, he attached himself to Siéyès. Within a week they were friends, though each was for himself and saw things from an opposite point of view to the other without betraying it. In immediate essentials they saw eye to eye. There must be another *coup d'état* and another constitution. Neither would be a novelty; people were getting used to them. The novelties were to be introduced later, and without the assistance of Siéyès. The days of the Directory were numbered.

The first essential was to get the legislative bodies to transfer their sittings to a place less accessible to the mob than the Tuileries. A Jacobin conspiracy was the excuse, and accomplices in the Council of Ancients, including the President, found little difficulty in arranging this precaution. Napoleon and a body of troops were to escort them to St. Cloud. The Jacobins themselves were flattered by Bonaparte who, indeed, endeavoured to ingratiate himself in the good graces of all parties. Siéyès and Ducos voluntarily resigned as part of the plan; Barras was forced to do the same; Gohier and Moulins refusing to surrender were put under arrest. The days of the Directory were over.

The story of the 19th Brumaire (10th November 1799), of how the building occupied by the Five Hundred was surrounded by troops, of the cries of "Down with the Dictator! Outlaw him!" of the bravery of Lucien Bonaparte, of the temporary breakdown of

Napoleon's resolution and his quick recovery, of the passing of a decree by a little group of legislators annihilating the Directory, adjourning the Councils for three months and creating Napoleon, Siéyès, and Ducos provisional Consuls is an often-told tale. It needs no repetition in these pages.

From that midnight meeting the onward course of the French Revolution was linked with the career of the Man of Destiny, and his influence continued long after his death at St Helena. Like Louis XIV, he too could say, "The State, it is I!" The Sovereign People and the Rights of Man were superseded by the Emperor and the Empire. Yet there was no restoration of the *ancien régime*, with its economical and political privileges, and democracy had its "career open to talent." For these principles, amongst others, the nation had fought in the stormy days of 1789–99. Under Napoleon many of the old wounds of France were healed and others were made; yet the travail of her people gave birth in many of the States of Europe to saner ideas of nationality and of liberty than she herself had been able to achieve by means of the States-General, the Assemblies, the Convention, and the Directory. The bronze eagle with its shattered wing which marks the spot where the Old Guard made its last stand at Waterloo should be held in veneration by all. For the French Revolution brought about the reconstruction of Europe and many of the privileges which, being common to all, are no longer regarded as such by those who did nothing to win them.

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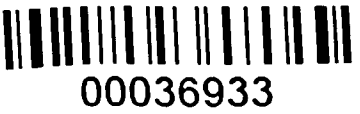

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